LETTERS

ON

PURITANISM AND NONCONFORMITY.

" We are concerned for this interest, not merely as the cause of a distinct party, but of truth, honour, and liberty; and, I will add, in a great measure, of serious piety too."

The Rev. Dr. Doddridge.

" We are Protestants, not from indifference, but from zeal."

The Hon. Edmund Burke.

" When in the books and sermons, that plead for the church of England, I find sober dissenting ministers censured and condemned as usurpers, impostors, and lay-intruders; all their administrations nulled, their assemblies denied to be parts of the catholic church, all who join with them sentenced as schismatics to the pit of hell, and no hopes of salvation given them, but what God's general mercy allows to moral heathens; and all the reformed churches that have no bishops, —that is, diocesan bishops,—falling so far under the same censure, that their ministers cannot be admitted ministers of the church of England, unless they be re-ordained, while those who have been popish priests may; and all these harsh censures excused from uncharitableness with this, that they cannot help it, their principles lead them to it: then, think I, the Lord deliver me from such principles, and from that pretended unity, which is destructive of real charity."

The Rev. Matthew Henry.

LETTERS

ON

PURITANISM AND NONCONFORMITY.

BY

SIR JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS, KNT.,

LL.D., F.S.A.

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TO

THE REV. ROBERT VAUGHAN, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH MUCH ESTEEM,

BY

HIS LONG ATTACHED FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

In making the following Letters public, I am not inclined to apologize; although I could plead the urgency of friendship, and of judgments as sound, as they are clear.

I have felt the more disposed to "show my opinion" in these agitating times, because I am not certain that, even among Nonconformists, there is not less acquaintance than ought to be, with, at least, some of the views as well as the habits, and character, of their ancestors: and because, too, of the revival, latterly, with an activity approaching to delirium, of those misrepresentations which have often operated to the detriment of dissenters; and which minister to the gratification of tempers quite contrary to Christian charity.

Not only has much been taken for granted, which examination shows to be erroneous; but

there has been, and too often is, a disposition to take for granted, rather than to investigate; to believe what is slanderous, rather than to doubt its correctness. No person acquainted with the history, and principles of Nonconformity, can be otherwise than struck, with the artful falsehoods which have thus abounded: and which I regret to say, disgrace not a few productions of the press.

Who that has looked at the subject, can read such books as the generality of those constituting "The Englishman's Library:" some of the Tracts of the Christian Knowledge Society: and several popular Tales, without feeling how strongly the authors, because of aversion to Nonconformity, draw upon the ignorance, and credulity of their readers? As the Jews of old, were trained to despise the Gentiles, and to identify religion with ceremonies, so writers like those in question, manifest zeal for what they call the church,* by disdaining dissenters; by excit-

* See the Congregational Magazine for 1833, pp. 268–282, where the "Artifices of the British Magazine," are well exposed.

ing against them the most unjust and unfounded prejudices; and, not to say more, by the veriest defamation.

Such productions have, nevertheless, not been without their use. They have attracted attention to the controversy between churchmen and dissenters; and have led many, as well as myself, to an increased scrutiny, and observation.

All such writers may be sure, that, in proportion as the matter of Nonconformity is investigated—and it *is* investigated more than ever—in the same proportion will their ends be defeated.

It was so aforetime. Similar movements and long experience altered the views of the incomparable Philip Henry. Once he was willing, in many things, to conform; but the treatment he received, discovered to him the mischiefs of human authority in religious concerns;* and,

* See his Life, pp. 123, 188, 189, ed. 8vo, 1825.

In Mr. Henry's Diary for 1673, is the following entry:—

practically, though not nominally, he became an Independent. The same reasons drove the accommodating Baxter, whom Warburton pronounced "famous," further and further from the Anglican church. They made him more "sensible of the sin and mischief of using men cruelly in matters of religion, and pretending men's good, and the order of the church, for acts of inhumanity, and uncharitableness."*

That differences of opinion between good and honest men will exist, especially upon topics like those now in view, is to be expected. There always have been such differences; and as search is made after truth, an increase of visible diversity seems likely. Bishop Hooper refused to wear the episcopal habit; and Archbishop Sancroft felt the Nonconformists' objections to

"February 16, Mr. Leigh at chapel, [i. e. Whitewell Chapel.] Discourse at noon not altogether suitable to the Sabbath; concerning ceremonies; but something said in public led to it: viz., that the magistrate hath *power* in imposing gestures and vestures."—Neg. *Orig. MS. penes me.* See also the Life, p. 446, Note §, ut supra.

* Reliq. Baxt. p. 131, fol. 1696.

the burial service to be so great, that he would never undertake the duties of a parochial minister. But who would, therefore, deride, or despise, or revile either the one, or the other? There may, it was well remarked by the late excellent Dr. Jebb, Lord Bishop of Limerick, be "differences, even in matters of scriptural truth; still more decided differences in what may be called matters of religious economy; but they need not, and I trust the cases may become numerous, where they will not, impede mutual charity."

To cultivate charity should be the business of Christians; and as they keep before them the mind of Christ, it will be so. *That* will do more to bring about real unity, than the best theory of church government ever yet enforced, or devised.

The ensuing Letters will, I trust, enable those who, either from want of familiarity with the subject generally; or from early imbibed prejudices; have, hitherto, been influenced by the statements of hostile partizans, to form a more

correct judgment as to many things which have, again and again, been erroneously represented. It will be seen, not only how little reason there is to shrink from investigation; but how important it is accurately to know the situation, the character, the opinions, and the labours of those illustrious defenders of English Nonconformity, who, in ecclesiastical high places especially, have, like the first Christians, been "everywhere spoken against;" notwithstanding that, as a body, they have maintained a much nearer conformity to the doctrines of the established church than the generality of its own clergy.

It is far from my wish, in what follows, to appear as an assailant of that church. Towards its members, as towards those in every other communion who bear the image of Christ, I would cherish cordial good will; and those who differ from me in opinion, conscientiously believing the church of England to be all its admirers could wish, I would not willingly offend. I can see, and feel many of the attractions of their

system, and its fascinations, too, as making "a fair show in the flesh." While deeply sensible of defects, and, as I think, serious errors also, I can admire the beauties of its common-prayer; and not a few of its dignitaries, both among the living and the dead, I greatly honour in the Lord. Yet, every increase of acquaintance with what is at issue between the conformists and dissenters, particularly as associated with Oxford Tractarianism, additionally satisfies me, with the principles of Congregational Nonconformity.

It is the distinguishing, and scriptural excellence of those principles, that they do not regard religion as political, but as spiritual: *not* as national, but personal. They maintain that churches should consist only of those who give evidence of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that each church, when framed, is independent of all others as to government; every separate church being under law to Christ; and to him alone.

If the tenets of the Oxford school correspond, as their advocates assert, with the genius and

constitution of the Anglican establishment, both Nonconformity, and Congregationalism appear to me, more than ever necessary, and important. For, although the system of the Tractists may be constructed from the more corrupt part of the Christian era; from popery; from human, and therefore, fallible councils; from the writings of Laud, and Dodwell, and Hickes, and Bennet, *cum multis aliis:* it cannot be gathered, nor have I seen it attempted, from the Book of God. Not only is there nothing in the Bible *like* it, but the whole of the inspired canon seems in direct opposition to it. The effort so strenuously made by Dr. Pusey, and his party, tends, unless I am mistaken, to the restoration of that spiritual despotism which triumphed during the dark ages. The principles they advocate are essentially arbitrary; and seem identical with the intolerance which produced the civil war; the impeachment of Laud; and the murder of the king.*

It cannot be surprising that such a state of things should occupy men's thoughts.

* See Note A.

The unity of the church, as by law established in England, has, because of nominal uniformity, been, oftentimes, boasted. But now a schism "*in* the body," answering to the scriptural definition of that crime, presents itself to every eye. I can, and do readily, make the fullest allowance for the attachment of churchmen to their favourite platform of spiritual rule; but I cannot perceive any good reason why they should evince so much sensitiveness at the notice taken of their position; at freedom of discussion; and at the utterance, by dissenters, of their own sentiments. It always looks as if reasoning were forcible, when it displeases those who are resolved against it.

A glaring instance of that want of real uniformity to which I have referred, has lately been conspicuous in the case of the Reverend Prelate who fills the See of London, and one of his clergy. His lordship, having laid it down in a recent "charge," that baptismal regeneration is "undoubtedly" the doctrine of the church of England; and that "sacramental justification" is

her plain doctrine also, the Rev. Dr. Holloway has printed a "Reply" to prove that neither the one, nor the other, is so. And this is only a specimen.

Congregationalists contend for the independence of the church as to the state. The Oxford Tractarians are clamorous on the subject. So are many sons of the Scottish Kirk. There is, nevertheless, a material difference between the one and the other, hinging upon what is meant by "the church." In the dictionary of the revived sect in the English establishment, that Proteus term means sacerdotal authority backed by the civil power. Congregationalists intend no such thing. *They* look at the subject in connexion with Holy Scripture; regarding the visible church, as I have stated, and shall presently show, in union with "faith in Christ." Accordingly, they deprecate every kind of alliance with magisterial power, because the primitive church was independent of it, nay formed in opposition to it; and all legislative aggran-

dizement, because a national church is unknown to the New Testament.* They have "one master," even Christ, and all Christians they regard as "brethren." Their views are, in the fullest sense of the word—*catholic*. Neither acts of parliament, nor Tractarian arrogance, can prevent them saying, and singing, too, with good Dr. Watts,

"The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But *one* communion make;
All join in Christ, the living Head,
And of his grace partake."

Why then, it may be asked, is there such unfriendliness on the part of many churchmen towards dissenters? Nonconformists are as much recognized by the state as themselves.† As a body they are, and have been, at least as loyal,‡

* "One thing is certain, that, in the primitive church, there was no Establishment."—Letters to the Rev. Peter Roe by the Rev. Thomas Scott, Rector of Aston Sandford. Scott's Works, vol. ix. p. 559.

"For three centuries it pleased God to leave Christianity to make its own way by its own mere strength."—Mrs. H. More's Works, vol. x. p. 298, 8vo, 1818. Hints to a Princess.

† See *post*, Letter xiii. ‡ See Note B.

and as good subjects.[1] They are as interested in all that concerns the welfare of the realm. They are equally solicitous for the honour of God, and the extension of his kingdom among men. And, although they do not think alike, in reference to the constitution and formularies of the church of England, they are (I mean the Independents, for with them I have more particularly to do) in doctrine one; and as to ecclesiastical form, I may apply in favour of Independency, what Bishop Jewel, in his celebrated Apology for the Church of England said as between that church and the church of Rome,— "After all the false and malicious imputations which envy and hatred have propagated against us, they are still unable to prove that we have forsaken either the word of God, the apostles of Christ, or the primitive church."

"Nay," observed the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, in his eloquent Discourse at the ordination of the Rev. J. W. W. Pritchard, speaking of himself and other Independents, "we are precisely in the situation of the first Christians. *They* had

no political head—no splendid hierarchy—no state connexion. For three centuries they continued separate from the world, managing their own affairs, relying on their own resources. *Ours* is not the guilt of innovation! *Ours* is not the temerity of experiment! If we are wrong, we are not singular! We have as much alliance with the national church, we are as closely re-ated to a political religion, as ever were Tertullian, Polycarp, and Ignatius; as ever were John, Peter, and Paul."

Is it pretended that any wrong has been done by inquiry into these things; by bringing human teaching, and human systems, no matter whether ancient or modern, to the infallible test? Congregational Independency shrinks not from the ordeal: it pleads for the liberty claimed;* and would, on no account, encroach upon it. If the

* "Of all Christian sects, the Independents was the first, which, during its prosperity, as well as its adversity, always adopted the principle of toleration."—Hume's Hist. Charles I. chap. iii.

Mr. Brodie, in his History of the British Empire, bears the same testimony, vol. iii. p. 517.

fullest freedom of inquiry *be* erroneous, where is Protestantism? What was the Reformation? Besides, what can more invite such scrutiny, than the fact of the British government upholding *three* sorts of religious establishment? Prelacy in England. Presbyterianism in Scotland. Roman Catholicism in Canada. They cannot *all* be scriptural. It may be that none of them is so. Surely it is consonant with Scripture and common sense, to examine the subject, and to form a judgment upon it.

Were Confucius, or Mahomet, the avowed master of such persons as would prevent this, or treat their Christian brethren, differing from them only upon non-essential points, contemptuously and harshly, the matter would be intelligible.* But to associate conduct so unworthy, with the Lord Jesus Christ; or to regard the actors as *his* servants, would involve the Christian revelation in the deepest reproach.

These observations, I need scarcely say, are intended to apply only to those whose conduct

renders them befitting. I rejoice to know, that there is a goodly number of members of the Anglican hierarchy to whom they do *not* apply; men of God, who neither approve of such conduct, nor "have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons."

That by the schism I have referred to, the country is driven back to the principles of the Reformation, is plain; and the battle can only be fought again by an appeal to that perfect and complete standard, the *written* word of the Most High; that "sword of the Spirit" which is still "mighty through God, to the pulling down of every strong hold," whether of priestcraft, sin, or Satan.

In the following Letters, which relate to many chieftains in the holy warfare, and are intentionally desultory, I have felt it unnecessary to go over the ground so often, and so well trodden as to Nonconformity, in its general history, and principles. The works of Neal and Alsop, Baxter and Calamy, Dr. John Owen, John Wilson,

Benjamin Robinson, James Pierce, Micah Towgood, Robert Hall, Josiah Conder, and Doctors Bogue, Bennett, Wardlaw, Vaughan, and Price, not to mention the Savoy Confession, and Heads of Agreement in 1691, are amply sufficient to meet every inquiry, to solve every doubt, and guide in every difficulty, which either thought or investigation may suggest.

From those important writings it will be evident to any impartial reader, that our forefathers opened doors which "no man can shut." Indeed, notwithstanding the opposition, more like a conspiracy than unity, which Churchism presents, and which is now afresh urged, with an abhorrence of Nonconformity, as great as ever Dean Swift expressed to popery, those doors are widening more and more; and many are entering in.

I should regret it, were I understood to assign to the topics of the ensuing Letters, the importance I attach to the great doctrines of Christianity; doctrines to which, as set forth in the

articles of the church of England, I could subscribe my unfeigned assent. I regard them, so exhibited, as Protestant in spirit and intent; and scriptural in expression and meaning; embracing, in clear and intelligible language, those blessed truths of God's word which stand connected with eternal salvation. But I do, nevertheless, attach a minor importance to the ensuing themes; believing them to be, in the main, accordant with the same divine authority. The Rev. Samuel Bury, in his Funeral Sermon for the Rev. John Fairfax, ejected from Barking, in Suffolk, alluding to the expulsion, in 1662, of so many hundred peaceable divines, thus accurately explained my meaning; and the secret, also, of the energetic decision of those much injured men. It was "only for the honour they had to the kingly power of Christ, in his church, and the preservation of their own consciences inviolate."

Such is the pillar of true Dissent: the very basis of Congregational Independency: and let opponents rail or argue as they please, I cannot

but regard the system of Congregationalists as purely religious; and its abettors, as entitled to the attachment and respect which are due to scriptural intelligence, sound Protestantism, and sterling piety. I would, however, be far from confining esteem to *them*, any more than by searching the Scriptures, and proving all things, and so obtaining satisfaction as to the truth of God, I would be prevented saying, whatever differences may remain,—"Grace be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Indeed,—*this is Dissent.* "It is a stand," the language is the Rev. Thomas Binney's, in his Dissent not Schism, "not merely for the claims of Scripture, and the supremacy of Christ,—not merely for the liberty of all to consult his will, and to follow their convictions, and thus to render him a reasonable service; but it is a stand for the recognition of all as Christian brethren who hold the Head; it is a stand for mutual indulgence in secondary differences, grounded on agreement in what is supreme; it is a stand for substantial and visible

unity by being a stand for universal Christian communion,—for the unrestricted intercourse of ministers and churches, in spite of the diversity of forms of discipline. To make uniformity of government the criterion of the church, and the basis of reciprocal intercourse and communion, is to put church order in the place of Christ. Christ must be first; fellowship next; and *then* as much uniformity as will follow from the two. This is the principle, and the spirit of evangelical Dissent; and hence, *instead of being schismatical,* IT HAS LESS OF SECTARIANISM, AND MORE OF CATHOLICITY, THAN ANY OTHER SYSTEM WHATEVER."

It is my earnest desire that the following Letters may tend to make this manifest; to expel the demon of reproach; and so to promote a catholic spirit,—that *love* which is the bond of perfectness," the very "end of the commandment." Such is the design. It is not to oppose any section of Protestant and orthodox Christendom; nor to widen existing breaches; nor to defend the champions of their *own* establish-

ment, whether Prelatical or Presbyterian, in which Popery, under the guise of Protestantism, has been conspicuous; but to explain; to illustrate; to induce examination and thought; to lead, if possible, to an impartial survey of Nonconformity, in the development of its essential, and I believe, apostolical principles. It will thus be seen that, while as better understood, and hostile to persecution in every form and modification, they are in harmony with divine truth; with the love of monarchy,* and subjection to civil authority; with, in short, the truest allegiance; and that, instead of presenting an obstacle to the charity which is enjoined upon the Saviour's disciples, they are promotive of it in the only practicable way. "It is good," said Lord Bacon, "that we return unto the *ancient* grounds of unity in the church of God; which is, one faith, one baptism; and *not*, one hierarchy, one discipline."

I am free to acknowledge that had I indulged my own taste only, the following Letters would

* See Note C.

have been in some respects differently constructed. There would have been the entire absence of a controversial cast. Not that I disapprove of controversy. It has become especially necessary. Truth *ought* to be defended against the rampant errors of the day. The "faith once delivered to the saints," should be *contended* for in the spirit of Christian duty, and a godly zeal. But what I mean is this; that while I should have best liked a mere exhibition of Puritanism and Nonconformity, apart from any prominent notice either of slanderers or opposers, I have felt constrained by the times, and with a view to usefulness, to combine, on the present occasion, a mixture of that portraiture of real piety, of which the subject is so capable, *with* the correction of erroneous impressions, and the advocacy of men "of whom the world was not worthy."

It is my intention, however, to prosecute the subject in the other form; and to furnish an exhibition of Puritanism and Nonconformity in proof of the *goodness* which is allied to those princi-

ples; leaving it, in the main, to tell against the badness to which it is opposed, whether in former times, or our own.

The public will thus see, in spite of gainsayers, still more abundant evidence of that enlightened piety which has prevailed, and does prevail, in those much calumniated quarters; which, in fact, triumphs over the drivelling superstitions, and arrogant assumptions, and conspicuous anti-christianism, of high church principles, whether associated with Oxford or Rome.

JOHN BICKERTON WILLIAMS.

The Hall, Wem,
March 4th, 1843.

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LETTERS

ON

PURITANISM AND NONCONFORMITY.

LETTER I.

"The province of the magistrate is the world, and man's body; not conscience, or the concerns of eternity."—*Sir Henry Vane, Knt.*

"The time, happily, is past, when conformity—to the church of England—was enforced by penal enactments. Whether to come within the pale of this community or not, remains simply now for individual conscience to decide, according to the obligation it may attach to preserving Christian unity." —*Sir Archibald Edmonstone, Bart.*

My dear Friend,

At a time of so much excitement on subjects relating to the church of God, it is natural your thoughts should move more than they have hitherto done, in that direction. The questions now in agitation mark very strongly the advances made in

the best knowledge, the result as well of education, as of the numerous societies of a religious nature which adorn and bless the land.

It is no marvel that a wide circulation of the Scriptures, and a more general preaching of the Gospel, should have roused slumberers; or that multitudes who have long dwelt at ease in Zion, should have been disturbed into activity. It is rather wonderful that no more have sought the heights which render observation easy. Many, however, have done so; and instead of confining their gaze, as was the case with our ancestors, just emerged from Popery, to a *portion* only of the inspired teachings—the doctrines which belong to our "peace"—they ponder the kingdom of Christ as a subject of supreme importance. They look at it, not merely in reference to things imposed by Acts of Uniformity, but to the *power* of imposition; and all in connexion with the divine testimony; that Bible, which Chillingworth, to the annoyance of those who would take away the key of knowledge, observed, "is the religion of Protestants;" a sentiment which Oxford Tractists treat with contempt. These prefer tradition to it, (that "muddy fountain of everlasting nonsense," as the Archdeacon of London, Dr. Jortin, called it) conjointly with the authority of "the church."

As you attend to the matter, you will perceive the closest alliance between the principles of Protestantism, Protestant Nonconformity, and the New Testament; their identity with the maxim laid down by "Peter, and the other apostles"—that, in the cause of religion, "we ought to obey God rather than men." By considering this impartially, and how it is illustrated in the sacred word, to say nothing of later histories, you will entertain no doubt, that, whenever the mandates of human power interfere with the inspired rule, or clash with that liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free, dissent becomes a duty. Loyalty to the sole Head of the church—Jesus, who is the prince and lawgiver, as well as Saviour of his people—requires it.

Civil authorities, notwithstanding unerring truth limits their jurisdiction to things secular, may be, and for wise and holy ends not unapparent, have been permitted to enact laws inconsistent with Christian submission, and then to punish parties dissenting *as if* evil and disobedient.* It was so as to our blessed Lord. It was so as to his apostles. It was so as to the first Christians. It was so as

* This subject was pointedly noticed by Lord Bacon. See his Works, vol. vii. p. 51, Montague's ed.

Martin Luther, to whom the Protestant world is so deeply indebted, was called the Trumpet of Rebellion. See Jer. Burroughs' Excellency of a Gracious Spirit, p. 130, 12mo, 1640.

to the martyrs. It was so as to the Puritans and Nonconformists. But this does not alter the case. The rights of conscience remain as uniform and inalienable as they are spiritual; and when infracted, you witness the movements of persecution; the imputation of crime apart from its existence.

But, as my object is not to enlarge upon a topic which appears evident, and upon which "the sagacious and venerated Locke" (so Mrs. H. More justly calls him) has unanswerably written, I shall merely refer you to two important publications; the one is a sermon on "The Nature and Extent of the Office of the Civil Magistrate," by Dr. Ibbot, rector of St. Paul's, Shadwell, and chaplain to King George the First, preached before the Lord Mayor of London in 1720, lately reprinted. The other is, "The Kingdom of Christ delineated, in two Essays on our Lord's own Account of his Person, and of the Nature of his Kingdom, and on the Constitution, Powers, and Ministry of the Christian Church, as appointed by himself," by Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin.

Both these productions appear to me proof against refutation; and, coming from dignitaries of the Established Church, show the energy of biblical truth, when separated from those trammels with which selfishness, and ambition, if not dislike to scriptural piety, have so often surrounded

it. It is gratifying to see refined and honest minds brought, even amidst unfavourable circumstances, to elucidate and defend those principles, for maintaining which, Nonconformists have sustained an amount of scorn and suffering which defies calculation.

I might here advert to such *details* in reference to Nonconformity, as have given thrilling interest to the Acts of the Apostles; the Martyrology of good old John Fox; the writings of Neal, and Calamy, and Brook; and, to mention no others, the biographies of Dr. Owen, and Baxter, Philip Henry,* and Oliver Heywood. But it shall be my present business to look at the subject rather in its *causes*. These will involve the great principles to which I have alluded, and which both the royal chaplain, and the primate of Dublin, have exhibited with convincing force.

A moderate degree of attention will make it manifest to you, how much mistaken notions of the church, and of unity, arising from ignorance of, or inattention to, the New Testament dispensation, have had to do with Christianity.

You will often find the sentiments even of the more educated, both erroneous and confused. In one of the mottos I have selected for this letter,

* See Note D.

you see an example of confounding unity and uniformity; whereas no two things can be more distinct. It is impossible fully to express the delusion which thus prevails. Hence your familiarity with the phrases—*our* church; our holy and apostolic, nay, purest part of the apostolic church. It was so in former days. In that curious volume, Smectymnuus Redivivus, 4to, 1654, you may read as follows; "These Episcopal men," prelatists concerning the church of England, "deal as the Papists, that dazzle the eyes, and astonish the senses of poor people with the glorious name of the church, the church, the holy mother the church. This is the Gorgon's head, as Dr. White (Bishop of Ely) saith in his preface to the 'Way to the True Church,' that hath enchanted them, and held them in bondage to their errors. All their speech is of the church, the church, no mention of the Scriptures, of God the Father, but all of the mother the church."

Now, nothing can be more deceptive than this. For it is not, all the while, the church of Christ that is meant, but the church of England, as established by law. That which is denied by multitudes of as learned, pious, and holy men as ever lived, is taken for granted; namely, that the church of England, and the church of Christ, are synonymous terms. So great indeed is, in many

respects, the *dissimilarity*, that you may overlook all Nonconformist writers, and confine yourself to the publications of churchmen only—the Acasters, and Spencers, and Rilands, and Nihils—to see it. Could you affirm, with the semblance of correctness, of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it is "greatly encumbered with the superstitions and corruptions of popery?" Such a declaration was made, however, of the church of England, by that persecuted Puritan, and moderate man, the Rev. Thomas Wilcocks, of St. John's College, Oxford. And does not Oxford itself, and the conduct of every Tractarian in the kingdom, confirm it?

Where will you find an advocate of what are called church principles, that is, of the church of England as the only true church, and her ministers as the only true ministers, that could have written the following beautiful effusion? And yet it seems to accord well with the infallible guide. You probably know that the author, Mr. Conder, is an Independent, and the talented writer of "The Choir and the Oratory," as well as, to mention nothing more, two very able volumes "On Protestant Nonconformity."

UBI TRES ECCLESIA.

What is a church? Let truth and reason speak,
And they will say, the faithful, pure, and meek,
From every fold, the one selected race,
Of all communions, and in every place.
Crabbe.

What constitutes a church?
Not Roman basilic or Gothic pile,
With fretted roof, tall spire, and long-drawn aisle:
These only mock thy search;
Fantastic sepulchres, when all is said,
Seek not the living church among the dead.

What is a church indeed?
Not triple hierarchy, or throned priest,
The stolen trappings of the Romish beast,
Altar, or well-sung creed,
Rites magical, to save, not sanctify,
Nor aught that lulls the ear, or lures the eye.

A band of faithful men
Met for God's worship in an upper room,
Or canopied by midnight's starry dome,
On hill-side, or lone glen,
To hear the counsels of his holy word,
Pledged to each other, and their common Lord.

These, few as they may be,
Compose a church, such as, in pristine age,
Defied the tyrant's zeal, the bigot's rage;
For where but two or three,
Whate'er the place, in faith's communion meet,
There, with Christ's presence, is a church complete.

In the associations of high churchmen (multitudes of whom never attend public worship,*) the church is identified with a building, or a priesthood, or a nation Christianized—pardon the expression—by an act of Parliament. Unity is confounded with the use of the same liturgical rites and observances; and the economy of grace itself, which so "excels in glory," is encumbered with the ceremonies and priesthood of a typical and superseded dispensation. They appear when using the Old Testament, not to discriminate as to the divine intention in its several parts and seasons. As if a veil of darkness covered them, they substitute and seem content with sound, instead of sense. It is hardly possible you should fail to perceive, that, as if utterly disregarding New Testament disclosures, as well as those rules of interpretation which make error difficult, they *misapply* truths in themselves important; and, finding a platform under the Jewish economy, which served the purposes of a theocracy, transfer it, in part, to a state of things, for which it was, obviously, neither designed nor revealed.

Such persons, you will observe, concede to the *magistrate* the power of choosing a religion for the people, and prescribing the mode of worship; and,

* See Note E.

consequently, of using force* in the cause of the Saviour. Whereas, in the pattern thus partially adopted, the magistrate was entirely excluded. He neither chose, nor could he originate or alter a single thing.

This fundamental mistake, for such it seems to me, vitiates alike their ideas and their reasonings. But, instead of dwelling upon it further, I shall refer you to the acute and learned Lectures of Dr. Wardlaw, in reply to Dr. Chalmers; and to his, if possible, still more impressive Letters in answer to the Rev. Hugh M'Neile. Nor would I omit Archbishop Whately's "Essays on some of the Dangers to the Christian Faith, which may arise from the Teaching or the Conduct of its Professors;" particularly the Third Essay, with its Notes; and the Second Discourse, on the best mode of conveying scriptural instruction.

* See Note F.

LETTER II.

"The scheme of policy, which, under the approbation of the apostles, was adopted for the use of the first century, may be discovered from the practice of Jerusalem, of Ephesus, or of Corinth. Those societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman empire were united only by the ties of faith and charity. *Independence* and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution.

"The public functions of religion were solely entrusted to the established ministers of the church,—the bishops and the presbyters, two appellations, which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the *same* office, and the *same* order of persons."—*Gibbon's Roman Empire*, ch. xv.

"I think they have no bad ground to stand upon, who are of opinion that, originally, bishops and presbyters were one and the same. See Acts xx. 17, 28; Titus i. 5, 7; 1 Peter v. 1, 2, 3."—*Sir Richard Hill, Bart.*

CONNECTED with sentiments as to the "church," may be noticed a similar kind of confusion, to say no more, as to the office of bishop. That term has been diligently kept up, and not without effect, by the Anglican church, though it has only *diocesan* bishops, or more correctly prelates.

The word "bishop" is often found in Scripture in connexion with the church of God. So is elder, and so is pastor. The simple question is, what is

meant? Is it the overseer or instructor of a single and independent society; or a ruler of rulers, that is, a diocesan prelate?

High churchmen assert for diocesan-episcopalian government, a *divine* right, an apostolical origin. So that the question is not, whether those who claim for it no other original than that of a human institution, are right or wrong? *Their* principles do not oblige them to nullify the ministry of other Protestant churches, nor to censure and unchurch other Christian communities. Neither is it the question, whether diocesan episcopacy, as part of the ecclesiastical constitution in England, is or is not correct; nor how far the civil power is at liberty to model to its own fashion the administrative operations of a national church; but simply, whether there is any just ground for affirming a *divine* original for *diocesan* episcopacy? My own opinion is, that there is none; that the claim is at variance with Scripture and history.

Instead of going into the controversy, I will refer you to the writings of Lord Chancellor King, Baxter, Dr. Owen, and David Clarkson; and especially the late Dr. Mason's "Refutation of the Claims of Diocesan Episcopacy." I will remark, however, that according to that singular book, "The Godly and Pious Institution of a Christian

Man," published in 1537, made by the whole clergy, signed by two archbishops, nineteen bishops, eight archdeacons, and seventeen doctors of divinity, and established by Act of Parliament as the universal rule of faith, no real distinction exists between bishops and priests, or presbyters. It says, that of these two orders only, that is, priests and deacons, Scripture maketh express mention; but the primitive church *afterwards* appointed inferior degrees. Throughout the whole discourse it makes presbyters and bishops the *same;* and avers, that no one bishop has authority over another, according to the word of God.

Such was the teaching of that illustrious scholar, Dr. Whitaker, the Puritan Regius Professor at Cambridge. In his answer to Campion's "Ten Arguments," he says, "A presbyter and a bishop are, by divine right, the *same;* and if Arius was a heretic for saying so, Jerome certainly was akin to the same heresy." In his reply to Drury, he broaches the like sentiment,—"Presbyters being by divine right the *same* as bishops, might warrantably set other presbyters over the churches."

This being so, I cannot help regarding multitudes as having been, and as still deceived, by a use of the terms episcopacy and bishop in a sense more than equivocal. They are taught to

confound diocesan with primitive episcopacy, notwithstanding they are so very different. The word bishop, as commonly used, does *not* designate a primitive bishop, but one strictly diocesan; a species of episcopacy unknown to the New Testament, though adopted by the church of Rome. So that, in truth, a divine origin is claimed by *such* Episcopalians for what, as far as the Bible and the earliest churches are concerned, is a novelty, a mere human invention. The present Lord Bishop of London, in his Sermons on the Church, thus uses the term, and I may appeal to any ingenuous person whether it is not calculated to mislead. Had his lordship prefixed the term diocesan, when he employs the word bishop, the fallacy would have been palpable.*

Gibbon, who seems to have given the subject consideration, says that "the title bishop denoted inspection over the faith and manners of Christians committed to his *pastoral care*." Such is the episcopacy I can see in the New Testament, and such only.

I regret the seldom use of the term by Congregationalists, because I think they have the thing intended, and as practised in the purest age of the church.

* A masterly notice of these Sermons appeared in the Eclectic Review, for September, 1842.

These sentiments derive confirmation from the "Essays" of Archbishop Whately, already referred to, and the "Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries," by the Rev. Dr. Kaye, who now fills the see of Lincoln. Those learned prelates have fairly brought out the point for which I contend. The latter says, that "in *Tertullian's* estimation the apostolic churches were independent of each other, and equal in rank and degree;" a fact which, while it involves the primitive episcopate, fairly uproots that which is diocesan, otherwise than as of human institution.

Another member of the church of England, the Rev. J. E. Riddle, M.A., who has made "Christian Antiquities" his peculiar study, admits, in his manual so entitled, that "the functions of the minister now called a bishop are *not* identical with the functions of either the apostles, or the bishops of the primitive church; and consequently, that the Anglican church of the present day possesses not only no successors of the apostles, but not even their counterparts or resemblance." Although Mr. Riddle does not seem to think this an argument against the favourite polity of an Anglican Episcopalian, he does urge modesty upon its advocates.

In addition to the mischiefs incident to an indiscriminate use of the word "church," and the

equivocal use of the term "bishop," there is another sense of the word church, which is entitled to notice, namely, the application of it to a *building*. For there seems to be no scriptural authority for such an application at all, but the contrary. In the sacred volume, "church," denotes either the whole body of the faithful, or some particular society; never, you will find, the place of assembling.

When, therefore, people say, "We go to church," the phraseology is purely conventional, and erroneous. By such language, wrong ideas are conveyed to the mind, and a materialism, foreign to the New Testament, being thus familiarized, many are deluded.

That from an early period, but much later than the apostolic era, the place where Christians met for divine service, was known by the name ἐκκλησία, or church, I admit. So Dr. Watts uses it in his Psalms, see the 122nd, on "going to church." Mrs. H. More, likewise, does so, when she says, "A good man is a good man, whether his church has got a steeple to it, or not." * But this does not affect the *scriptural* view of the matter.

* Works, ut supra, vol. i. p. 362.

You will find some important instruction upon "churches" and "fellowship," with their incidental associates, in the ela-

It follows, that whenever the term "church" is used to designate an edifice, which can be done only by a figure of speech, Nonconformists have as much right so to employ it as churchmen. Every dissenter may say,. "I go to church," as properly as any churchman can say so.

borate lectures on the "Causes of the Corruption of Christianity," delivered by Dr. Vaughan, at the Congregational Library, in 1834, particularly lecture ix.

LETTER III.

"Some have evidently laboured to bring in an English, though not a Roman popery. I mean, not only the outside and dress of it, but equally absolute; a blind dependence of the people upon the clergy, and the clergy upon themselves."—*Viscount Falkland.*

"Schism is theirs whose the *cause* of it is; and he makes the separation who gives the first cause of it, not he that makes an actual separation upon a just cause preceding."—*Dr. William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury.*

A DESIRE to render religion subservient to the civil polity may be noticed as another of the causes of nonconformity. Had rulers been content to receive the dues of Cæsar, and leave to God the things that are his, how much had been avoided, that still distresses many Christian men. Usurping, as to the worship due to Jehovah, authority never intended for their use, such potentates, like Nebuchadnezzar, have made laws, whose only effect has been to shackle the understandings, to prostrate the intellect, and ensnare the consciences of men, and even to punish the best and holiest of our race.

The advocates of this confusion have ventured to

claim, in connexion with it, superior if not exclusive loyalty. They have branded those who assert the supremacy of heaven in things *sacred*, as though such a doctrine involved aversion to the proper authority of earth. Treason against the King of kings has thus, monstrous as is the attempt, been made a test of loyalty to human monarchs. It was so in the case of Daniel, and the three Hebrew youths, and of the apostle of the Gentiles, when taken before Felix. *He* was accused as "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition," and a heretic. But said he, "After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets." What is the whole of his magnanimous defence, if not an illustration of the great principles of Nonconformity?

Nothing can more clearly show the unscriptural character of the attempts thus adverted to, than a consideration of apostolic movements and teaching. *They* were the reverse of an unworthy subserviency. Lord Lyttleton, in his "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul," noticed, (and the argument in favour of nonconformist principles is irrefragable,) that all the authority that chiefest of the apostles exercised over the churches, including those he planted himself,

"was purely of a *spiritual* nature; tending to their instruction and edification, without any mixture of that civil dominion, in which alone an impostor can find his account."

Closely allied to the desire of thus subordinating religion, has been a determination by rulers, especially ecclesiastical, to carry matters with a high hand; to say, So will we have it. Hence the disasters in Scotland. In every part of the struggle for Christian liberty, which her sons so valiantly maintained, you may see this resolve written in letters of blood.

The following illustration occurred as to the English Act of Uniformity, in 1662, upon which the church of England still rests. A dignitary of that establishment, Archbishop Sheldon, to whom a gentleman expressed some regret that the door was so strait, that many sober ministers could not have admission, replied, "It is no pity at all; if we had thought so many of them would have conformed, we would have made it straiter."

That many of those who were ejected strove to conform is certain. Like the peaceable John Corbet, best known as the author of "Self-Employment in Secret," but turned out from Bramshot, in Hampshire, they studied the matter with great impartiality. "Many parts of conformity *he* could have

yielded to," says Baxter in the sermon at his funeral, "but not to all;" and "nothing less than *all* would satisfy."

This disposition to tyranny was, at the time, no unobserved nor misconceived evil. It moved to displeasure (it is Baxter's account of his friend) that mirror of benevolence and meekness, and every Christian grace, Henry Ashurst, Esq., by whom a "serious, godly Independent, Presbyterian, or Episcopal Christian was truly loved and honoured; and who knew not how to show himself angry, no nor displeased, otherwise than by mild and gentle words." Such, indeed, was the impression made by so manifest a departure from a catholic spirit that even *he* would unceremoniously strip off every veil, and express his great dislike of "the hinderers of the Gospel, and silencers of faithful preachers of it, and persecutors of godly Christians, and oppressors of the poor." Nor could "their pretences of government, and order, and talk about schism," ever "reconcile him to that sort of men."

That it was mere "talk about schism," is plain; because, if such persons really thought it sinful for Nonconformists to separate, would they not, ought they not, the separation so generally turning upon points confessedly indifferent, to have prevented it, by a timely removal of obstacles, instead of making them terms of communion?

The truth is, that those high-minded and triumphant rulers, desired anything rather than to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Their object was to get rid of those whom, for going out, they condemned as separatists.

You will not overlook the love of dominion, or, in other words, the essential spirit of popery, which is prominent in all this. The "impositions," whose mischiefs have been so powerfully exposed by Vincent Alsop, and similar writers, can only be regarded as evidential of a proneness in governors to legislate for Christ; to mix up his kingdom, which "is not of this world,"* *with* it: to command *that*, which Scripture has left to human liberty; and so to compel obedience to regulations which no authority can lawfully make. Where, in the Bible, is there ary power given to man over the conscience of his fellows, in things pertaining to God, or the slightest sanction to the *imposition* by mortals of a particular way, or mode of worship, be it in itself ever so good?

Yet all the laws for "uniformity" proceed upon the assumption that this may be done. The notion, for obvious reasons, has been long acqui-

* See Dr. Wardlaw's sermon on this text in 1833. It was entitled, "Civil Establishments of Christianity tried by their only authoritative Test, the Word of God." Also a note by Archbishop Whately, in his Essays on the Dangers to Christian Faith, &c., p. 319, ut supra.

esced in by very many; not by the thoughtless, and ignorant, and self-seeking only; but by those who have either misapprehended or overlooked inspired teaching, or undervalued the rights of conscience, and its exemption in matters of faith from human control. These are the common complainers of want of unity, of the multiplication of parties; and they were thus aptly described by Locke; "They who talk so much of sects and divisions, would do well to consider whether those are not most authors and promoters of sects and divisions, who *impose* creeds, and ceremonies, and articles of men's making; and make things not necessary to salvation, the necessary terms of communion, excluding and driving from them such as, out of conscience and persuasion, cannot assent and submit to them; and treating them as if they were utter aliens from the church of God, and such as were deservedly shut out as unfit to be members of it,; who narrow Christianity within bounds of their own making, which the Gospel knows nothing of; and often, for things by themselves confessedly indifferent, thrust men out of their communion, and then punish them for not being of it."

In addition to such devices, the word schism,*

* See note G.

has been used as a scarecrow, for harassing the timid and unlettered; and too often successfully. It is, nevertheless, as clear as Scripture can make it, that a person remaining in a church may be guilty of schism; whereas he that separates may be free from that guilt; just as our Reformers were in leaving the Romish communion; and such is the case, unless the Reformers were schismatics, with even those who, baptized in the church of England, quit that body upon a preference to a church differently constituted, owning Christ more exclusively as its Head, and the Bible alone as its authoritative rule. How generally is the maxim of the ever-memorable Hales, of Eton, true, and accordant with it is Archbishop Laud's declared sentiment cited as a motto to this letter—that not he that separates, but he that occasions the separation is the schismatic.

Besides, Nonconformists *cannot*, as to the Establishment, be guilty of the alleged crime; because it is impossible for them to commit the sin of schism against a church, however pure, to which they do not belong. According to the New Testament, schism supposes a continuance in church relation. Hence the exhortation that there should be "no schism *in* the body."

The term schism, involved for the purpose in needless mystery, has ever been a favourite weapon

of priestcraft; and the energies of that subtle power have been combined to make it appalling. It was so in Milton's day. That great writer thus notices it; "As for those terrible names of sectaries and schismatics which ye have got together, we know your manner of fight; when the quiver of your arguments, which is ever thin, and weakly strewed, after the first brunt is quite empty, your course is to betake ye to your other quiver, that of slanders, wherein lies your best archery. Whom ye could not move by sophistical arguing, them you think to confute by scandalous misnaming, thereby inciting the blinder sort of people to mislike and deride sound doctrine and good Christianity, under two or three vile and hateful terms."

Still the same "warfare" is carried on, and, I am sorry to notice, with the same unhallowed weapons,—derision, scurrility, exclusive dealings,—closing the doors of public institutions for educating children, unless upon condition of going to "church;" and when such expedients have failed, an exclusive distribution, even of charities intended to be general, has been resorted to, whereby many of the poor have been injured.

Having thus alluded to exclusive dealings, a system which seems to spread almost co-extensively with Oxford Tractarianism, I cannot help remarking, how strikingly the zealots who resort to them,

seem to emulate one of the representations of papal antichrist. You see it in the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, "That no man might *buy or sell*, save he that had the mark of the beast." For such persons, as is the case with Romanists,* interdict to the uttermost of their power, and intention, from traffic, and all the benefits of society, every tradesman, how humble soever, who is found in the ranks of nonconformity. One of these champions for "church principles" was lately asked by a shopkeeper known to me, whose predecessor had been long dealt with, and had now retired in the applicant's favour, for continued support; but the moment, the question having been asked, dissent was avowed, an end was put to all dealings. Well might Dr. Vaughan urge the public mind to the iniquitous and odious principle thus brought out, by publishing, as a tract, his "Modern Persecutor Delineated;" besides which, he has wisely made it a part of the second edition of his "Congregationalism."

But for the resistance offered to such arbitrary procedures, upon which all *impositions* in matters of religion are based, where would our present liberties have been? I acknowledge that in the great

* See Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, diss. xxv. vol. ii. p. 296, ed. 1793.

struggle, and during an important part of its continuance, it was the partizans of one scheme of church government striving for domination in place of the other; still the *struggle,* let the motive have been what it may, was for constitutional rights against the intolerance natural to man, and the encroachments and tyranny of despotism, and, therefore, promotive of liberty. Hume admits in his "History," that Puritanism and the principles of civil liberty advanced together. Nor do I think he was mistaken, when, notwithstanding cherished hostility, he was constrained to testify, in the same chapter, that "so absolute was the authority of the crown, the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved by the Puritans alone." "It was to this sect," he adds, "that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution."

Are these, then, the persons to be treated with the flippancy of heartless indifference, *as if* all their efforts, and all their sufferings, only happened because they were offended at the colour of a garment, or a few harmless requisitions, if not usages of antiquity? Those who either delude themselves, or gratify their prejudices, by such notions, discover a lamentable want of fairness, and a perfect destitution of knowledge. Hume, cordially as he hated the Puritans, and maliciously as he

treated them, guards his readers, though amidst a volley of sarcasm, against imagining that they were only persons of weak understandings. He shows that they had among them men of the greatest parts, and most extensive knowledge, in the nation. He admits that the majority of the parliament were, at one time, Puritans, or so inclined. And Lord Clarendon says, that the Independents were even more learned and rational than the Presbyterians: that *they* were followed by the more substantial and wealthy citizens, as well as by others of better condition.

It was unworthy of Bishop Heber to select for his "Life of Jeremy Taylor," just those representations of Puritanism and nonconformity, in which Hume, and other slanderers, have ignorantly, if not malevolently, indulged.

Lord Nugent, in his "Memorials of the Illustrious Hampden," whom he styles an Independent, acted a far better part. We see his lordship at pains to strip off the disguise which Hume, at times, put on in order to inspire hatred against the Puritans; he exhibits the unfairness that was used towards them; he notices the ascription of wrong motives, and the substitution of even a jest for impartial history. He further demonstrates how the movements of high churchmen, in the reign of Charles I., and the "resolutions concern-

ing copes and crosses, bowings and genuflexions, and tables put altar-wise, and pictures in churches," were "the symbols, under which they were compromising with popery:" how they were, thereby, "proceeding to scandalize, discredit, and persecute the Puritans," "that venomous sect," whom "all the Catholic princes of Europe would come to his Majesty's assistance to root out." The noble author gives also an abstract of Conte Mayolino Bisaccioni's book, written in 1667; a volume which silenced every doubt as to the object of Panzani and Rosetti, in their mission as nuncios from Rome to the English court. An echo, indeed, was made by it to the voice of all veritable history, that the Puritans, as their descendants have ever been, were sound Protestants, the uncompromising *opponents* of popery; not merely of every effort for its restoration in our happily emancipated country, but of every tendency towards such a calamity.

Enough has appeared to evince the nature of Nonconformist principles, which have seldom had fair play. By maintaining scriptural truth; by contention for the simplicity of the early church, and "the faith once delivered to the saints;" by resisting high-churchism; by exposing the sophistry of those reasonings, and the inaccuracy of those assertions, whereby ecclesiastical

tyranny has been uniformly supported, dissenters unavoidably counteract a train of evils, with all their agents and designs. And these having been artfully blended with what is true as to civil affairs, the parties most interested in the unhallowed combination have abounded in slander, malice, and uncharitableness. Thus it was, and for the same reasons, in the days of the first Christians. The "quiet in the land," because faithful to their risen Lord, and "preachers of the resurrection," were accused of "turning the world upside down;" of being "troublers of cities;" in short, of doing "contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, there is another King, one Jesus." As to the apostle Paul, the very prototype of nonconformity, they said, with acclamation, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live."

Hence, when Nonconformists have entered the field of controversy, they have been driven there. Commonly, their most searching publications have appeared in the shape of a "Reply" to unprovoked attacks. This was the case with Dr. Wardlaw's "Lectures" and "Letters" already mentioned. So with the Rev. J. A. James' "Dissent and the Church of England; or a *Defence* of the Principles of Nonconformity contained in the Church Member's Guide, in *reply* to a pamphlet entitled,

The Church of England and Dissent." I may also mention, "The Church of England indefensible from the Holy Scriptures, in *reply* to several recent defences, and especially Two Sermons by the Rev. J. Garbett, M.A.," by the Rev. Dr. Redford.

The movements which gave rise to the publications just noticed, have been vigilantly watched by the "Patriot Newspaper," by the "Congregational Magazine," and by the "Congregational Union" too, whose tracts deserve more attention than they have yet received.

The ablest refutation of the claims of diocesan episcopacy, with which I am acquainted, and to which I before referred, was written in America, by the late Rev. Dr. Mason, of New York; but that witty and eloquent divine tells us, he did not begin the controversy, nor engage in it till after long forbearance under multiplied provocation. It was reprinted in this country, in 1838, with an appropriate introduction and appendix, by the Rev. John Blackburn.

I believe the publications of the Christian Knowledge Society (many of them, as clergymen themselves have acknowledged, of the most erroneous description, in doctrine and spirit,) originated "The Ecclesiastical Library." Out of charges, and lectures, and sermons, more than I

can enumerate, all calumniating dissent and dissenters, and dealing in the boldest assumptions as to the structure and claims of the church of England, sprung the "Evangelical Voluntary Church Association;" and thence a monthly "Voluntary," which does honour to its originator, and editor. I must not overlook the "Christian Examiner," so ably and spiritedly conducted by the Rev. James Carlile; nor the Liverpool Young Men's Voluntary Church Society, at which have been delivered some of the most powerful lectures of the day.

LETTER IV.

"Christianity was so miserably defaced by the superstitions of the middle ages, as scarcely to be distinguishable, in many respects, from Paganism."—*Dr. Van Mildert, Lord Bishop of Durham.*

"Attempts to force conscience will never produce conviction, and are only calculated to make hypocrites or martyrs. Persecution, be assured, is against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy."—*The Earl of Mansfield.*

In apostolic times, the "mystery of iniquity," so often mentioned in the "Epistles," had made considerable progress. It moved with an onward step, through successive centuries, until the Bible was kept from the common people, and then Rome triumphed. Nor was there any material check, in this country, to the vast accumulation of power and influence by the papal court, until the Reformation dawned in the person of John Wycliffe. Although that renowned servant of Christ at once employed himself to illumine his fellow-subjects, yet the progress of the "new opinions" was, as might be expected, slow. It was, however sure; and has been traced with great skill, by Dr. Vaughan, in his elaborate "Life of Wycliffe."

It is only by familiarizing yourself with such

authors as Dr. Vaughan, and John Fox, and Hallam, to mention no others, that you will perceive what you owe to the venerable Rector of Lutterworth, and his immediate followers; to a host, afterwards, of blessed men, the Latimers, and Cranmers, and Ridleys, and Bradfords, who had courage to suffer death for the "truth;" and thus break a yoke, under which this kingdom had been groaning for ages.

They were, nevertheless, far from agreed in all things, pertaining, either to Gospel truth, or worship; and they were still less enlightened as to church fellowship, and religious liberty. Enamoured with the Reformation, in respect to some of the *doctrines* of Christianity, which had been awfully eclipsed, they were, comparatively, indifferent to other points, except just so far as they were made to feel the thraldom of the existing supremacy. Their ideas being entirely national, the fruit of training, and, probably without inquiry, they seem to have had no conception of what Scripture teaches as to the "church;" nor to have imagined that it *can* only consist of accredited believers; so constituting, when multiplied, what the Apostle Paul styles, "the churches of God;" the "churches of the saints."

Accustomed to look at the Redeemer's kingdom as it appeared after Constantine, rather than

in its earliest and purest state, they had, for anything that appears, no knowledge that such designatory passages as the following, had a place in the Holy Book. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints"—"To the church of God which is at Corinth, them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"—"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia"—"To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus"—"To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons"—"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse"—"Unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, if there be any meaning in language, surely these citations discover how unlike any national church must be to a rightly-constituted church. The men of the Reformation, however, such is the force of habit, and early influences, were so much in the dark upon this subject, and of the nature of unity as *in Christ*, as to dread, and it was so with their immediate successors, separation from the hierarchy. Had relaxation in the terms of conformity been permitted; or, to

borrow Bishop Warburton's energetic diction, had "no severity" been used, but "that of reason, and no force but that of prayer," the rise and growth of most separate congregations, had, most probably, been prevented.

Congregationalism, as well as Puritanism, emanated from the Reformation. Not that such was its origin;* but its principles, having been suppressed, and borne down for many generations, *then* revived.

It is well to keep in mind the obstacles to this revival; those stratagems which Rome has uniformly employed; and which, in the early history of Puritanism, were common. It is notorious that the parish churches were chiefly filled by men of the most depraved and ignorant description; men, who, as fit tools for their superiors, were diligently occupied in *hindering* the Reformation. Not only were informers encouraged, but they were hired. The most trivial affairs were magnified into im-

* "But suppose such *had* been the case, I believe," says the observant James Howell, "it is a principle which no man will offer to controvert; that, as antiquity cannot privilege an error, so novelty cannot prejudice truth."—Familiar Letters, vol iii. p. 16, 8vo, 1655.

It was well contended by a reverend martyr, Archdeacon Philpot, when examined before Bishop Bonner, and his infamous coadjutors, that "*prescription* hath no place in matters belonging unto God."—Examinations and Writings of Philpot, published by the Parker Society, p. 48.

portance. Nor was malice confined to the living. It pursued the dead if, when alive, they had been so much as suspected of thinking for themselves; of reading the Scriptures; or of doubting the correctness of that form of worship, which had been saddled upon the nation. All such, indeed, were stigmatized as heretics, and their remains subjected to the disgusting indignities of a Papal excommunication.

A case of the sort occurred not far from the spot where I now write. Every reader of the Martyrology knows the history of the Glovers. Robert was burned at the stake at Coventry, in 1555. John and William died a natural death; but, because of their "constant profession of the Gospel," they were refused burial. The curate of Wem, for there William died, "one Barnard," having not only denied the churchyard, but obtained the sanction of his diocesan, carried his point; and, in the month of September, 1558, the body was laid, "in a broomfield," nigh to the town; "where," to borrow Fox's observation upon a similar case in the vicinity of Shrewsbury, "he is, no doubt, as near the kingdom of heaven, as if he had been buried in the midst of the church."

By such doings as these, coupled with the examinations and sufferings of the martyrs, not to mention their letters, tracts, and preaching, it

was, that the Reformation proceeded. The truths of Protestantism; in other words, the principles of Nonconformity to established impositions in religious affairs, having entered, leavened the community. The spirit of inquiry advanced. The authority of priests was shaken. And hence, the fierce contentions, the undisguised contempt, and the infernal rage which mark the period.

Protestant Nonconformity is the Reformation carried out, into a closer accordance with Scripture, than, originally, was either intended or practicable. By asserting the right of private judgment its confessors effected first, a divorce from the hurtful doctrines, and some of the superstitions of popery. Increasing light gave visibility to Puritanism, which aimed at effacing the line which the *then* ecclesiastical authorities drew around the state church. And this resulted in efforts, to restore Christianity to its primitive simplicity; and, in a denial of the right of Protestants to assume that power in things sacred, which *they* upset at the Reformation.

Such principles as those last mentioned, and they are strictly the Congregational, *existed* from "the beginning." It appears plain by "the sacred narrative," says Archbishop Whately, "that though the many churches which the apostles founded were branches of one spiritual brother-

hood, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the heavenly Head—though there was one Lord, one faith, one baptism for all of them, yet they were each a distinct, *independent* community on earth, united by the common principles on which they were founded, and by their mutual agreement, affection, and respect; but not having any one recognized head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of these societies over others."*

It was not, however, until some years after the Reformation, when it became evident that the care of the most conspicuous actors was not, whether there should be an establishment, but of what *nature* it should be, (the necessity for *some* establishment was taken for granted,) that the principles of Independency showed themselves prominently. Standing at an equal distance from Diocesan and Presbyterian intolerance; from all dictation in matters of worship, as well as faith; and relying, in the spirit of genuine Protestantism, upon scriptural authority *alone*, they limit religious responsibility to God; and disclaim the interfe-

* Essays, p. 105, ut supra.

That great luminary of the church of England, Dr. Isaac Barrow, says the same. "At first," he writes, "each church was settled apart, so as *independently*, and separately to manage its own concerns: each was governed by its own head, and had its own laws."—Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy, p. 248, 4to. 1680.

rence of the civil power, as well as tradition in religion. Thus they escape that admixture of secular and sacred interests, which divine wisdom evidently designed should *be* separate; inattention to which design has proved the saddest bane of Christendom; the fruitful source of every kind of persecution; and subversive, as far as possible, of the noblest freedom.

The churches planted, through the instrumentality of the beloved Martyr of Erromanga, among the tribes of Polynesia, were all formed upon "Independent principles." How efficiently they have worked, you see detailed in the "Narrative of Missionary Enterprises;" a volume which records, as one of our best prelates has observed, "the most striking work of divine grace, since the apostolic times."

Very lately, the subject has been again brought before the public in a Life of the honoured author of that "Narrative;" a service rendered to his memory by the Rev. Ebenezer Prout; and *so* rendered, as to form one of the most interesting and skilful specimens of biography I have ever seen. The following extract from it is too appropriate to need an apology for its introduction—"While at Savaii, Matetau, the powerful chief of Manono, came to Mr. Williams to solicit a teacher; and, as an inducement to compliance, declared that he

would *make* his people place themselves under his instruction. 'I thought it advisable,' says Mr. W. 'at once to tell him that he must not *force* them, contrary to their own wishes; but, having set them an example *himself*, and exhorted them to follow it, then to leave them to their own convictions and inclinations; but the employment of any kind of coercion to induce men to become Christians, was contrary to the principles of our religion.' This passage contains the rule upon which he invariably proceeded; it shows the sense in which he understood the prophetic declaration, that 'kings should be the nursing fathers' of the church; and it supplies an answer to all who have charged him with employing the power of the chiefs to compel their people to profess the Gospel."

The question between the Establishment, and Congregationalists, is simply this—whether each church should be, as in the days of the apostles, free from control by the civil power, and under no other rule than that which the Saviour, as "Head over all things to his church," has prescribed, or not? Congregationalists take the affirmative, and the sentiment has widely spread. It is diffusing itself over the Continent of Europe as well as in this country, and America. And I venture to predict, that it will continue to do so, in propor-

tion as it is impartially considered, tested by Scripture, and understood.*

It is narrated of an admired Puritan—Colonel Hutchinson—that, as he approached his "everlasting rest," he set himself "to a more diligent study of the Scriptures; whereby he attained confirmation in many principles he had before; and daily greater enlightenings concerning the free grace, and love of God in Jesus Christ; and the spiritual worship under the Gospel; and the Gospel liberty—*which ought not to be subjected to the wills and ordinances of men in the service of God.*"

And, that truly good woman, and learned dissenter, Mrs. Bury, we are told, was fully persuaded that God would patronize the Nonconformist interest as his own; revive it out of its bondage; and make it honourable at last. She felt confident that all the prayers, and tears, and treasure, and bonds, and sufferings of its noble confessors would not be always forgot or unrewarded. She often repeated to poor ejected ministers the words of the prophet Isaiah, chap. lxvi. 5, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word;

* An excellent "Catechism of New Testament Principles respecting the Constitution and Government of the Churches of Christ," has appeared posthumously from the pen of my late very learned and valued friend, the Rev. C. N. Davies.

your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."

In sustaining the position I have taken, as to Puritanism and Congregationalism, it is not necessary for me to affirm, nor would I be understood as doing so, that, in the progress of the conflict, the battle between Papists and Protestants was, literally, the same as that which afterwards occurred between Protestant Conformists, and Protestant Nonconformists; because, at the first, as with Luther, who a long time worked alone, it was a fight, mainly, for the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith only, as opposed to the Romish mixture of faith and works, in point of justification before God. But, in *principle* it was the *same:* opposition in the one case, and the other, to unwarranted authority. The wedge then put into the church of Rome is still there, and reaches every religious establishment. The freedom of mind and thought asserted by the Reformers has been extended, and is extending to all departments of science, as well as theology.

I do, nevertheless, affirm this—that the church of England, when called to defend her own separation from the church of Rome, is reduced to the necessity of urging the principles of Nonconform-

ity. Nor will it escape notice, that the points which give rise to much of the current railing against dissenters, are those which Rome presses against the church of England. She disowns every minister of the Anglican establishment as unordained; and regards all its members as schismatics.

LETTER V.

"We are taught not to esteem the goodness of things by an outward and glorious show, but to be content with the homely simpleness that Christ taught us in his church, and used himself, for that is more pleasant than all the gorgeous devices of man's brain. The wit of man is never content to submit itself to the wisdom of God, but pleases itself more in his own inventions than in that which God commands; but the Gospel saith plainly, that that which is so excellent in the sight of man is abominable in the sight of God."—*The Rev. James Pilkington, Lord Bishop of Durham.*

"If we observe many persons, we shall find some so highly devoted to this, or that particular form of government, as if all the weight of Christian religion lay in it. If they see a man, otherwise of orthodox principles, of a pious and religious life, yet if scrupling some points of ecclesiastical government, though peaceable, they will esteem him little better than a heathen, a schismatic, heretic, and what not. As if the essence and life of Christian religion lay in the bare asserting of the best form of ecclesiastical government."—*Sir Matthew Hale, Knt.*

It was observed by a judicious Puritan, Dr. Robert Harris, president of Trinity College, Oxford, that "men of humble and sincere hearts, though different in opinions, can and do walk together, pray together, and love one another; but men, who wholly look at their own interests, blow the coals and fire:

as if the opinions were irreconcileable, and every one disaffected to Christ's cause who goes not their pace and path."

Among those "humble and sincere" individuals must be reckoned the Rev. Dr. Edwards, Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, and Vicar of St. Peter's, Colchester. He was born in the year 1637, and died in 1716. He, consequently, passed through England's vital changes, with favourable opportunities for observation. That he did not carelessly use them you will judge from the following brief extract from his "Preacher." He evidently saw Conformists and Nonconformists as they were, and he had boldness and honesty enough to speak out. His testimony almost a century and a half ago, was important. Is it less so now? Look at it.

"If we would open our eyes, we should see that we are beholden to the sober and moderate Dissenters for the continuance of a considerable part of our theological principles among us, even those which the church of England and her Reformers had left us. If there had been none of that party, the church of England had been long since ruined; for if the high churchmen had had no check, they would have brought in popery before this time, by a side-wind of Arminianism; and by their over-valuing of ceremony and pomp in divine worship."

It certainly is one of the advantages of Noncon-

formist principles, that, by familiarizing the mind with inspired instructors, and, thus with *truth*, theology is kept in its right place. An appeal is made only to "the law and the testimony." Now high-churchism dislikes this appeal. Its influence is exerted to get rid of it, by even chaining thought; and, having set up patristic authority, and human traditions, and sacerdotal claims, as idols, it would fain compel all to bow down and worship.

This, however, the genius of Nonconformity cannot brook. It knows how to appreciate the opinions of others, especially the wise and good. It can admire the eloquence with which poetry can invest antiquity; and the sentimentalism which can emblazon uniformity in religion, is neither lost upon it, nor overlooked. But there the matter ends. In the momentous concerns of religion Nonconformists are prepared to hear the voice of Christ, and that alone. How urgently soever, therefore, sentiments may be pressed, unless backed by *his* authority; and how thick soever the dust collected from an early period of the church's degeneracy may be, they pass along: *through* that which is ancient to the apostolic; and instead of clinging to fathers and schoolmen, and other fallibles as if *they* were to be called Rabbi, merely ask, "What saith the Scripture?" *There* they find antiquity, genuine, infallible, and pure; that "sure word of prophecy," whereunto men

"do well that they take heed." "We," saith John, "are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby we know the Spirit of God, and the spirit of error." But what can equal the dignity, or the clearness of the "Lord and Master," in the testimony borne by himself before Pilate? "I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that IS OF THE TRUTH HEARETH MY VOICE."

Others then, if they think fit, may lose themselves in the labyrinth of contradictions, impieties, and absurdities, which Mr. Isaac Taylor has proved, in his "Ancient Christianity," to have characterized the favourite era of Oxford Tractarians; but true Nonconformists will prefer listening to the Saviour and his apostles. Thus conscience will take the place of expediency, and the Bible of human authority.

I admire the account given of Mrs. Bury, the lady to whom I have before referred. "She statedly joined herself to dissenters, and was never ashamed, or afraid to own, or plead for them. It was not her education that determined her in this practice, but a faithful regard to Scripture, and conscience, and uncorrupted antiquity. She read, and considered, and fully weighed the controversy; and after her most diligent, and serious searches

for truth, she concludes 'I must be a dissenter in principle still, for aught I can see to the contrary. The way I am in, so far as I am capable of judging, is that which comes nearest to the Scripture rule, and is by much the freest for my conscience, and the way wherein I have found most of God; and, therefore, the way in which I must still walk. Far be it from me to censure others, and be it as far from others to censure me. They differ as much from me, as I do from them, and, therefore, it is but just that we should have equal charity.'"

In this way it is that "stedfastness in the faith" is secured, and that the soul becomes "established with grace." A fine specimen of the provision made for such establishment is contained in the first sixteen verses of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. You are there taught in what it consists, and how, under divine influence, it may be attained. Nor will the contrast which the passage furnishes to the teachings of high churchmen, fail to present itself strongly to your mind. The more you place Tractarian principles by the side of the word of God, the more will their sad contrariety, and their dangerous delusiveness, become conspicuous.

It is because of the revival of those principles, and the way in which their attention has been forced to them, that Nonconformists have become

increasingly disposed to scrutinize the "church," within whose precincts alone they seem to dwell. The Rev. John Kelly has embodied his impressions in a lecture, characterized by his usual ability, and peculiarly deserving of notice. It was published in 1840, under the title of "The Hindrances which Civil Establishments present to the Progress of Genuine Religion."

Since that time, the offensive personalities of a high churchman in the pulpit, have originated another Discourse by Mr. Kelly, with Notes. It is entitled, "The Claims of Diocesan Episcopacy, tested by the Word of God." If Puseyites make the Ante-Nicene school their penmen and evangelists, Mr. Kelly is content with those who were inspired: and so completely is he master of the subject, that it requires more than Mussulman gravity, not to smile at the pitiable position, in which the parson, who provoked the sermon, has placed himself.

Ely Bates, and his attachment to the hierarchy was beyond suspicion, says in his "Christian Politics," "Suppose a church to have a decided preference to episcopal [he means *diocesan* episcopal] government, not considering it as absolutely essential to her being, but as conducive to her well-being; not as indispensably necessary, but expedient; and this, chiefly, in respect to her

own edification, without any positive determination as to other churches; it is almost impossible that a preference thus qualified, should occasion any contest, or animosity. But, if she assert such a government to be of indispensable divine right, and set up a claim which nullifies the sacraments and administrations of other churches, she must expect to encounter the most violent opposition."

Now this is precisely the state of things at the present moment; and the battle of opinions, or rather of principles, has been, and is increasingly, urged on by high churchmen with, I think, a spirit of infatuation. I cannot help viewing the movement, *and* its old-fashioned insolence, as provoked by, and intended to check, the advances made by the country in knowledge, as the result of Sunday-school instruction, Bible and religious tract circulation, and more preaching of God's word. The light is spreading. It has passed through crevices hitherto closed. It has reached the highest ranks. "The Anxious Inquirer after Salvation Directed and Encouraged," by J. A. James, can occupy a place "at court," as well as, and with an infinitely better influence than, such books as "The Companion to the Altar," and "Nelson's Fasts and Festivals." The effect of these things upon Puseyism, appears to be as

agonizing as sunbeams to an owl. Feeling their insecurity in dealing only with Scripture, under such circumstances, high churchmen resort to tradition,* that they may, as I presume from the Bishop of London's late charge, and other sources of information, exalt *themselves*, with some semblance of propriety, through the authority of the "church." The effort at any rate seems to be to puzzle, if not to deceive.

An outrageous instance occurred, not long ago, in the case of Dr. Hook, who preached before the queen. He took a text as if from, though it is not in, the Bible, "Hear the church." It met with deserved rebuke in several quarters; and Archbishop Whately in his "Essays" has pointedly noticed it. The indignant primate not only exposed the fraud, but added, with merited sarcasm, "Those who adduce this passage, would, it may be presumed, have, at least, *preferred* bringing forward, if they could have found one, some passage of Scripture which does support their views."

The doings of the Tractarians are, however, far from resting here. They now advocate their "Latin sister," the church of Rome, and union with it. They thirst for its "dire weapon," excommuni-

* See Note H.

cation. They applaud the mummeries of monkery and asceticism. They urge confession to a priest, and arrogate to themselves the power of absolution. They wish to recede further and further from the principles of the Reformation. They oppose the Bible Society. They send their readers to "men's traditions," notwithstanding one of the Homilies of their church designates them "stinking puddles." They inculcate reserve in teaching Christian truth, especially that cardinal doctrine, the atonement. They would confine religious instruction to schools of the most bigoted, and sectarian exclusiveness. They treat baptism as regeneration; and affirm that its administration is invalid, unless performed by one who has had prelatical ordination.*

Listen to an Edinburgh Reviewer. "They," the Puseyites, "are zealous in teaching that the church is a definite society, endowed with high gifts exclusively limited to the clergy ordained in an unbroken succession from the apostles—that out of this church there is no Christianity,—that it possesses the gift of inspiration, and is authorized, collaterally with the Bible, to declare God's revealed will, not only in the way of interpretation, but also in the assertion of doctrines which are

* See Note J.

not actually found in Scripture,—that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is the appointed channel for man's salvation, and that none but an apostolically ordained minister can administer it,—that there is a real presence of Christ in the consecrated elements,—that general councils are infallible,—that works of penance procure pardon of sins,—that there is a purgatory for the purification of the saints,—that there is a sacrifice of the mass, wherein offering is made to God for the remission of sins,—that celibacy is a holier state than marriage,—that the blessed saints intercede with God for men,—that prayers for the dead are desirable; and sundry other propositions of a congenial nature with these. Surely the bare enumeration of their tenets, is enough to make it a puzzling task, to state, precisely, the limits that separate the holders of them from the church of Rome." *

The talented author of the foregoing extract, presses the case, in its different aspects, with stirring eloquence; and so exhibits the effrontery and disingenuousness, not to say quibbling, of the Tractarians, and their bad faith in remaining within the Anglican church, as to excite in honourable minds, indignant reprobation.

* Edinburgh Review, vol. lxxiii. pp. 272, 273.

In "The Church's Last Struggle," a Sermon by the Rev. J. B. Clifford, of St. Matthew's Church, Bristol, the *identity* of Puseyism with popery is maintained.

I might instance many of their publications as abounding in the same mournful errors; and many of them, I am obliged to add, are thoroughly Jesuitical.* One of their organs, "The British Magazine," is celebrated for manœuvring unfairness. Nor did the "Times" newspaper, forward in the same service, come short of its compeer, in a Review of Dr. Campbell's "Martyr of Erromanga." The insinuations there thrown out against the excellent Williams are in full Oxford keeping. The writer either knew, or ought to have known, that it was not the martyr Williams, but another person of the same name, and, it is said, a missionary pertaining to the Anglican church, who possessed himself of the "large tract of land" which Dr. Lang noticed. But the policy of Tractarianism seems to be thoroughly Machiavelian.

* Since this letter was written I have seen a pamphlet entitled, "Jesuitism traced in the Movements of the Oxford Tractarians, by Henry Fish, A. M."

LETTER VI.

"The *succession* is at Rome, as muddy as the Tiber itself. Then let succession know its place, and learn to vail bonnet to the Scriptures. The succession, so much pleaded for by the writers of the primitive church, was *not* a succession of persons in apostolical power; but a succession in apostolic doctrine."—*The Rev. Edward Stillingfleet, afterwards Lord Bishop of Worcester.*

"Cranmer, and his fellow compilers of the Articles, are well known to have held a friendly correspondence with the great founders and supporters of other Protestant churches abroad; who had the misfortune, (if it is one,) to think there might be a lawful call to the ministry *without* a prelacy."—*The Rev. F. Blackburne, Archdeacon of Cleveland.*

Bishop Jewel, pertly styled by one of the Puseyites, an irreverend Protestant, or Dissenter, having stated, in his "Apology," that the common argument founded on the pope's right of succession to St. Peter is of no weight, nay, utterly unworthy of any reflecting mind; declared truly that "God's grace is promised—*not* to offices and successions, but to him that feareth God, and worketh righteousness."

But, after such a display as that which the Tractarians have furnished, you will not marvel, that they, nevertheless, cling to (indeed their sys-

tem rests upon it) *such* a succession as that denounced by the venerable prelate, with the most dogged determination. To be contradicted by Scripture, historic truth, and common sense, as well as by members of highest station in their own ever-lauded church, seems to signify nothing to them.

Such conduct, however, will neither suppress inquiry, nor prevent others coming to the conclusion so correctly expressed by Archbishop Whately—that "there is not a minister in all Christendom, who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree."

The Bishop of Ely, before quoted, Dr. White, in his "Way to the Church" gives up the point, like the learned Stillingfleet, altogether. "We do not," he says, "contest for an external succession. It sufficeth that" ministers "succeed in the doctrine of the apostles, and the faithful; who, in all ages, did embrace the same truth."

In the Congregational Magazine for November, 1838, there appeared a very interesting Review of the three first volumes of "Tracts for the Times." As the *true* apostolical succession was put in a strong light, and may serve to show you, the character of that other succession, to which your thoughts have been directed, I will make a single extract from it. "We thank God that

there has been a succession from the apostles, not personal only, but spiritual, a continued descent from the fountain which they opened at Jerusalem, of the water of life. We glory in being able to go up to primitive times, and to connect ourselves with those chosen vessels of the Lord, upon whom the 'cloven tongues like as of fire' rested. It is our boast and joy. But it is not through the medium of episcopal consecrations that we do this; it is not by claiming alliance with Roman courtezans, and the leaders in Roman vice: but, by holding communion, in faith and feeling, with the English Lollards, the German Lutherans, the French Hugonots, the Bohemian Hussites, and the Piedmontese Shepherds. Thus we travel up the path of time to the fishermen of Galilee, and unite with them, and all who have been followers of their faith, in recognizing the sentiment—'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.'"

I have much pleasure in referring you to a volume on this subject, which bids defiance, as to refutation, both to Oxford learning and ingenuity. The accomplished Archbishop of Dublin cites it, and no impartial person can, I think, read it without admiration and satisfaction. It is, "An Essay on Apostolical Succession, being a Defence of a genuine Protestant Ministry against the Exclu-

sive and Intolerant Claims of Papists and High Churchmen, by Thomas Powell, a Wesleyan Minister."

But, able and conclusive as the volume just referred to, undoubtedly, is, I cannot withhold from you, the Rev. W. Jay's admirable summary on the same subject. It occurs in Memoirs of the Rev. John Clark, an excellent minister, who was within the ban of Oxford Tract principles. It has, I think, never been surpassed. "Some may be ready to ask, what authority had such a man to preach at all? And the question is easily answered: with regard to his own people;—their choice and approbation: with regard to the country in which he resided;—the law of the land acknowledging, sanctioning, and protecting his labours: with regard to God;—command, inclination, capacity, opportunity, success."

It is, perhaps, because of the scriptural plainness of the subject, that the strength of the Tractarians is continually directed to their favourite "succession," in order, as far as they can, to get rid of that plainness, and bring into contempt all ministers, except those of their own class. A course very similar to that which "false teachers" took, both with the Saviour and his apostles. Does it not look as if they emulated the application to themselves of those solemn words which

came to the prophet Jeremiah from the Lord, and which he was commanded to proclaim in the gate of the Lord's house? "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these."

You will begin not to wonder, that the Puseyites regard Protestantism as a heresy, and consider the very name—Protestant—as offensive. Indeed one of their number, abandoning that practised calmness, and those words, "smoother than oil," by which so many, like the ancient Galatians, have been "bewitched," has *anathematized* Protestantism, and the Reformation. This I should consider as being consistent, were it not that they hold fast the emoluments of the Protestant establishment. A few only of their number have had the manliness to go fairly to Rome. What a contrast is thus presented to those two thousand upright men, treated by the Tractists as "vile," who on the 24th of August, 1662, to maintain their integrity resigned their livings, and so carried onward the principles of Nonconformity.

When the Scribes and Pharisees, who seem almost the type of the Tractarians, and who were especially exposed, and their teachings denounced by the "Lord Jesus," became offended, and his disciples told him of it, "he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not

planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind." These portentous words well deserve the attention of the Oxford school; and their explanation too, by the venerable rector of Aston Sandford, in his "Commentary;" a work which the honesty of the writer has made remarkable.

It was not without reason, that the same distinguished ornament of the church of England, bore his solemn testimony, in another part of his "Commentary"—on Luke xvi. 15—against the same class of errors, now alas! prevailing still more extensively, in the following startling terms: "Though their"—the Pharisees'—"forms, austerities, superstitions, and traditions, were highly esteemed among men, as if they were of great excellency; yet, they were an abomination in the sight of God."

I fear, however, that those who have caught the Oxford infection, will not read Scott, although as much in "the succession" as Dr. Pusey!!

But, truth *will* prevail; and the opposition thus made will be overruled for good. It was so in former times. I anticipate that, by the inquiries present controversies induce, many will learn, like that good man, Sir Arthur Langford, Bart., to entertain "true notions of primitive Christianity, as described in the New Testament; and to dis-

tinguish it"—the testimony is that of the Rev. Joseph Boyse, in his Sermon at the funeral,—"from the unnecessary appendages, and the corrupt additions of succeeding ages, that only adulterate its simplicity and purity."

The opposition so strenuously made of old, to the principles of Nonconformity, turned out for their wider dissemination, and the "furtherance of the Gospel." So, I expect, it will be again. The venerable Stone, and Cotton, and Norton, and Shepherd, and Elliot, and Davenport, and Thomas Hooker, with others of the Pilgrim Fathers, when persecuted by the more than half-papistical bishops, took refuge in New England; and founded an empire, where religion flourishes to this day. An Episcopalian, now dwelling there, thus notices one of the results: "If the government of the United States were to make the proposal to any one of the Christian denominations among us, to be invested with a state establishment, they would, one and all, *decline the proposal*; and that from the fullest conviction, that the great ends of Christianity are better answered without such an establishment, than they could be with it." *

* Dr. Mac Ilvaine Bishop of Ohio. See Dr. J. P. Smith's Sermon on the Necessity of Religion to the Well-Being of a Nation. The Appendix, p. 38.

The same right-reverend bishop has added to his fame, by a

John Bunyan, when imprisoned for nonconformity, wrote a book which has eclipsed in usefulness the best doings of his cruel persecutors, and rendered *his* memory blessed, though their remembrance has perished.

The writings of a host of men who suffered in the same cause, continue, not only to edify Christians of every name, but as witnesses to the faithfulness of God to his church, in overruling, as well as restraining, "the wrath of man." The Letters of the Martyrs, and Samuel Rutherford, and Joseph Alleine; the Treatises and Expositions of eminent Puritans; the Works of Owen, and Baxter, and Goodwin, and Charnock, and Flavel, and Manton, and Bates, and Howe, are instances. A catalogue would surprise you; but my limits forbid an attempt at enumeration. I will only add, that when Lord Gordon of Lochinvar, and Viscount Kenmuir, came to die, an event which happened in 1634, he gave to a young man, his neighbour, the following counsel:—"Resort to good company, and howbeit you be named a Puritan, and mocked, care not for that; but rejoice,

recent publication, entitled "Oxford Divinity compared with the Romish and Anglican Churches," in which he proves, that "Puseyism is not only Romish in root and truth; but, so far as it has spread out doctrinally, is Romish in ramification also."

and be glad that such admit you to their society; for I must tell you, when I am at this point in which you see me, I get no other comfort to my soul from any other second means under heaven, but from those who ,are nicknamed Puritans. They are the men that can give a word of comfort to a wearied soul in due season; and that I have found by experience."

LETTER VII.

"The apostles do everywhere distinguish hereby the church from infidels, and Jews, accounting them which 'call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' to be his *church*."—*The Rev. R. Hooker.*

"We are all hastening to the light of eternity, which will dissipate innumerable clouds, and shadows of ignorance, prejudice, and misconception, which have kept, and still keep, so many good men strangers to each other's goodness."—*Dr. Jebb, Lord Bishop of Limerick, &c.*

It says much in favour of the correctness of Nonconformist principles, and shows the firm foundation upon which they stand, when you consider their progress in the face of innumerable disadvantages. The monarch is at the head* of the

* In an invaluable volume of Letters recently published by the Parker Society, from authenticated copies of the autographs preserved in the Archives of Zurich, is one written by Jewel to Bullinger, dated London, May 22, 1559. The following extract from it is observable.

"The Queen [Elizabeth] is unwilling to be addressed, either by word of mouth, or in writing, as the head of the church of England. For she seriously maintains that this honour is due to Christ alone, and cannot belong to any human being soever; besides which, these titles have been so foully contaminated by Antichrist, that they can no longer be adopted by any one without impiety."—p. 33.

church of England, as an establishment, which associates it with fashion. There are, moreover, tempting baits of honour and emolument, to allure the ambitious, and the wavering. You may have observed, also, something like hauteur in the conduct of many churchmen towards those who remain aloof, which some minds are too sensitive to endure. And as to the poor, they are often forced into conformity, by the withholding of charities and alms from those who do not attend exclusively at "church." Unrighteous, and I think unwise, too, as the plan is, the Emperor of Russia has been trying it with the Jews; inducing them to profess Christianity, by offering bribes to the compliant, and by not bestowing favour upon such as hesitate. If the object be to swell the ranks of nominal Christians, nothing is gained. If to make men Christians, it is unscriptural and absurd.

Still, — notwithstanding every hindrance, the genius of Nonconformity exists, and in a healthy condition. Besides the lower and middle classes, many in the higher ranks, think very differently on the subject of dissent from what they did. By means of the press, and otherwise, they are gaining familiarity with the history and writings of the men whom high churchmen have always "set at nought." They, at length, perceive the trammels with which

interested persons have surrounded them. The sneer, and the slander, and the inuendoes of imbecility, and oddity, and melancholy, and want of taste and learning, and all that is attractive in habit and association, have lost, to an unusual extent, their hold. A comparison being more easily instituted now, than it used to be, between Conformists and Nonconformists, and the principles of both; the consequence is, that, in proportion as the comparison is made, the veil which, hitherto, has kept the "deceived" in ignorance, is taken away. If Dr. Chalmers was called to lecture in London upon Establishments, Dr. Wardlaw, in the same metropolis, replied. The Lectures of the one, and the other, were printed; both have been extensively read, and in the very highest circles. The palm has been given, in my own hearing, to Dr. Wardlaw's reasoning, by a competency of scholarship, and intellect, and rank, far too commanding and exalted, to be either slighted, or impugned.

I earnestly wish that more of those in "high life" had an enlarged acquaintance with martyrs and reformers; with Puritans and Nonconformists. Mrs. Hutchinson's labours have done much to bring this about as to the latter, and I will give you one of her vivid descriptions. It is applicable to the middle of the seventeenth cen-

tury, and occurs in her captivating Life of the Colonel.

"The payment of civil obedience to the king, and the laws of the land, satisfied not; if any durst dispute his impositions in the worship of God, he was presently reckoned among the seditious, and disturbers of the public peace, and, accordingly, persecuted; if any were grieved at the dishonour of the kingdom, or the griping of the poor, or the unjust oppressions of the subject by a thousand ways, invented to maintain the riots of the courtiers, and the swarms of needy Scots the king had brought in to devour, like locusts, the plenty of this land, he was a Puritan; if any, out of mere morality, and civil honesty, discountenanced the abominations of those days, he was a Puritan, however he conformed to their superstitious worship; if any showed favour to any godly, honest persons; kept them in company, relieved them in want, or protected them against violent or unjust oppression, he was a Puritan; if any gentleman in his country maintained the good laws of the land, or stood up for any public interest, for good order or government, he was a Puritan. In short, all that crossed the views of the needy courtiers, the proud encroaching priests, the thievish projectors, the lewd nobility and gentry; whoever was zealous for God's

glory or worship; could not endure blasphemous oaths; ribald conversation; profane scoffs; sabbath breach; derision of the word of God; and the like; whoever could endure a sermon, modest habit, or conversation, or anything good; all these were Puritans. And, *if Puritans*, then enemies to the king and his government, seditious, factious hypocrites, ambitious disturbers of the public peace; and, finally, the pest of the kingdom. Such false logic did the children of darkness use to argue with against the hated children of light, whom they branded, besides, as an illiterate, morose, melancholy, discontented, crazed sort of men, not fit for human conversation. As such they made them, not only the sport of the pulpit, which was become but a more solemn sort of stage, but every stage, and every table, and every puppet play, belched forth profane scoffs upon them; the drunkards made them their songs; all fiddlers and mimics learned to abuse them, as finding it the most gameful way of fooling."

Now, what was the Puritan, thus authentically described, other than one that "feared the Lord?" Although so ignominiously treated, he was, by his holy influence, the very "salt of the earth:" and when Presbyterian Puritanism became, as through the violence of Laud and his minions it did, the ruling power, the government itself was

swayed by it. But then began the mischief. The party in authority required sanctity as well as obedience, which was an attempt to accomplish *that* which is beyond the province of legislators. The effect upon the selfishness of human nature was, as a matter of course, awfully direct; persecution of diocesan Episcopalians followed; fresh proof was given how little the principles of liberty were understood, as well as the mischief of impositions; and an irreparable injury was done to morals. For, while vice was apparently suppressed, hypocrisy was matured. So that, instead of religion making the happiest advances, there was, to a great extent, the appearance only; an approach, in an extreme direction, to the very opposite result of the Book of Sports. But, as far as the masses were concerned, probably little more.

You will, however, err, if you use this clue without discrimination; because, after making every deduction for all that followed the error to which I have alluded, enough of what was sterling remained, to justify you in regarding the period of Puritanic supremacy as one in which "pure and undefiled religion," remarkably prevailed. A fact to which Philip Henry, no mean authority, has borne his decided testimony. The Puritans and Nonconformists, you may rely upon it, were, as a body, eminently devout and religious persons;

the consequence, in a great measure, of their singular diligence in the more retired and "closet" exercises of piety. In Mrs. Hutchinson's graphic delineation you see the contrast *their* habits and deportment presented to those of their unceasing revilers. And the more you acquaint yourself with their history, the more clearly will you perceive what patterns they were of Christian devotedness. Intent upon "salvation," eternal realities filled their minds. The Lord's day, and the ordinances of his house, were their delight. They spent a considerable portion of their time in watching their thoughts; in studying themselves; and they kept their hearts "with all diligence." Instead of censuring and unchurching all around them, they looked within. They read, and they meditated, and they wrote much; and, in providing for the spiritual welfare of their families, they have never been surpassed. They were giants in understanding; men of solid attainments; and well established in the faith. The dangerous errors, which then, as now, were industriously scattered through the land, little affected them. They were too well instructed to be at the mercy of "every wind of doctrine;" still less to "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; for-

bidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe, and know the truth." It was in vain to tell *them* of the merit of good works; the insufficiency of Scripture; the authority of tradition; the importance of ceremonies; the papal, which is the Puseyite, view of apostolical succession; and the *opus operatum* of sacraments. Let who would follow "cunningly devised fables," they had been better taught, they were "taught of God."

LETTER VIII.

"It is a hard case that we should think all Papists, and Anabaptists, and Sacramentarians, to be fools, and wicked persons; certainly among all these sects there are very many wise, and good men, as well as erring. And although some zeals are so hot, and their eyes so inflamed with their ardours, that they do not think their adversaries look like other men; yet, certainly, we find that they *are* men that speak, and make syllogisms, and use reason, and read Scripture."—*Dr. Jeremy Taylor, Lord Bishop of Down, &c.*

"Be not ashamed of the name Puritan; the Puritans, were the soundest preachers, and, I believe, the truest followers of Christ. I esteem them as some of the most zealous Christians that ever appeared in our land."—*The Rev. James Hervey, Rector of Weston Favell.*

WERE those who are accustomed indiscriminately to censure Puritans and Nonconformists but to acquaint themselves with facts, to study their character in their works, and trace effects to causes, with a due regard to motives and circumstances, they would better comprehend the real state of the case; they would detect the self-interest which often attaches to misrepresentation; and, also, see what prodigious evils are engendered by religious hostility, high churchism, and infidelity.

Hume almost foams when he writes of Protestants, and the Reformation. He would have you believe, that the *Reformers* were all bigots, the victims of enthusiasm, and both fanatical and enraged. The Rev. Dr. Maclaine, in the second Appendix to Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," ably vindicated them; and I thus allude to it, because the defence equally applies, and for the same reasons, to Puritans and Nonconformists.

My impression is strong that, although high church principles and infidelity, or either of them, will fully explain the sufferings both of the Reformers and their successors, their habitual manifestation of "the power of godliness" is alone sufficient to account for the flagrant censoriousness which has attended them. "The world hated them," because they "reproved the world of sin." For, abating the infirmities inseparable from even regenerated nature, it would be difficult to find brighter exhibitions of Christian principle, and conduct, than, as a body, they manifested.

But I must confine myself to the Puritans and Nonconformists. That great man, Baxter, as he is justly called by Mr. Wilberforce, has thus pourtrayed some of them. I quote the reprint of his "Poetical Fragments."—

"Ancient and grave divines, solid and staid,
Who, from experience, both preach'd and pray'd:

Learned, yet counting Christianity
The chiefest learning and philosophy.
These, as the fathers of my untaught youth,
Were willing to communicate the truth.
Their help and fruitful converse was my stay,
And great encouragement in all my way;
More pleasant to me than my youthful games;
My love doth grudgingly suppress their names.
The company thou gav'st me was not vain,
Not proud or factious, sensual or profane;
But serious, sober, and obedient,
Whose time was in their faithful labours spent.
Humble and meek, who made it their discourse
To stir up faith, and penitent remorse.
Minding the lowest, and the highest things;
Not meddling busily with states and kings.
Making the holy word their chief delight,
And meditating on it day and night:
Spending that day in works of holiness;
Hating profaneness, lewdness, and excess;
Content with little, yet aspiring high;
Sparing no pains for immortality;
Low in the world; but for salvation wise;
Though scorn'd by faithless fools as too precise.
O my dear God! how precious is thy love!
Such thou wilt take to dwell with thee above."

The fascinating sketch of the Puritans in the eighty-fourth number of the Edinburgh Review, was made under the influence of common impressions, and concedes more than was needful: as for instance,—contempt of human learning, and recreative amusements; and also in reference to cheerfulness and phraseology. Some, no doubt,

were accurately depicted by the Hon. B. Macaulay's glowing pen; very many were not.

It is not my object to act the part of a partizan as to the Puritans, any more than as to any other set of men; nor am I inclined to advocate the blamable excesses and deformities which, sometimes, were associated *with* Puritanism, whether they occurred among laymen or divines, any more than any other excesses and deformities. They were visible and injurious. Some of that learned and devout body not only mistook, as we have seen, in legislation, the natural consequence of their notions as to the power of magistracy in things sacred, but they drew the bow too tight in other things. A lesson they, probably, learned from the "Homilies," which still belong to the church of England. Their familiarity with those celebrated productions, and to which they were trained, will explain much in respect of "apparel," and of "pictures" and "images," for which they have been abundantly vilified as fanatics. I can imagine, however, no more manifest ungenerousness, to say the least, than, after exciting by royal authority, to a vehement zeal for the extermination of paintings and images in churches, because of the "peril of idolatry," to upbraid the obedient, as though no such conduct had been required, no such sanction given. Fuller, the witty Prebend of Salisbury,

who kept a vigilant eye upon the Homilies, justly remarked, that the second, in the second book, "stands with a sponge in one hand to wipe out all pictures; and a hammer in the other to break down all images of God and saints erected in churches."

But the Puritans, forsooth, were very grave personages, and, if you are to believe their enemies, morose, malevolent, and insubordinate. This may, to a certain extent, be true; that is, as to many who, nominally, were mixed up with them. The extracts already given from Col. Hutchinson's "Memoirs," and Baxter's "Poetical Fragments," sufficiently refute the charge as a general one. Yet, if the religious leaders had evinced even a more solemn air than I believe they did, I am not aware of any just ground either for censure, or surprise. Many of them, as might be expected, *were* of grave, contemplative, and sanguine tempers; dispositions which are easily heightened by sufferings; besides, to the gay and thoughtless, a small portion of gravity would pass for gloom. Consider, also, the "troublous times" in which their lot was cast, and you will not wonder that they often moved along the "narrow way" in a spirit of heaviness; nor that the more awful attributes of Jehovah were the objects of habitual contemplation, rather than those which, because of different

circumstances, directly meet our apprehensions. There was sufficient above and around them, to clothe them with the "black" of melancholy—

—"Staid wisdom's hue."

Some of them had almost seen the martyr's fires; others were familiar with the coarsest ebullitions of angry pride; with imprisonment; and with fines; and all of them felt that they were watched with eyes as cruel as those of Mephistophiles. Indeed the world presented to them a front of terrible hostility. They were not only alarmed, and irritated, but they lived as in a constant thunder-storm. Death itself was in immediate, and ever-varying prospect; or what to them was worse,—the interruption, by the most exasperating tyranny, of their ministerial labours. Was it unnatural that self-examination and prayer should occupy predominantly their attention? That their daily and hourly concern should be to ascertain *why* God contended with them? To humble themselves before him, and to make clear their title to a habitation in heaven, when their mortal tabernacles, continually tottering with the blast of the "terrible ones," should fall?

They have been denounced as violent, and stern, and rude. I feel no disposition entirely to deny the charge. Some of them, especially among the

laity, were so. And marvellous would it have been had it been otherwise. In an age of excitement like that in which they lived; mingled in movement with every grade of intellect, not to say of ignorance and sentiment, both political and religious, a state of things inseparable from civil commotion; and affected by dispositions and influences as varied as the human countenance, it ceases to be surprising that the innocent suffered with the guilty. Besides all which, consider how many of the leading Puritans, like the scientific Galileo, were the hourly victims of priestly arrogance and superstition. Some were driven into perpetual exile. Study their examination before ecclesiastics, and you will feel no surprise if, with Shakspere's Phœbe, they answered with "frowning looks," and "bitter words." Before you condemn them, you will do well to ponder the ferocious tyranny, and vexatious suffering, to which they were subjected; some for conscience' sake and "the Gospel," others for liberty; all which was, upon the whole, endured with astonishing forbearance and courage, not to say meekness; and with an enthusiasm perfectly indomitable. You will thus understand Solomon's far-reaching remark,—"On the side of their oppressors there was power;" and his no less accurate axiom, that "surely oppression maketh a wise man mad."

It is convenient for haters of the Puritans, who have ever treated them with *wholesale* reproach,—as fanatics, levellers, and execrable,—to keep such considerations as these out of sight. But facts remain. The Rev. B. Brook, in his invaluable "Lives," has preserved the history of those persecuted worthies, and I believe its truth cannot be denied.

I ought to notice, notwithstanding Mrs. Hutchinson's allusion to it, that among the causes of settled ill-will against the Puritans, was their opposition to what was contrary to decency, sobriety, and gravity, especially the stage. The voice of slander sounded loud and long, in after years, against that highest of high churchmen, the Rev. Jeremy Collier, because *he* represented the theatre as the very hot-bed of profaneness and immorality; and against Archbishop Tillotson, for saying that it is the devil's chapel, and ruinous to men's souls. But, being Conformists, they, to a certain extent, were shielded. Upon the Puritans, however, the storm fell with relentless fury. The publication of "Histrio-Mastix: The Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedie," brought one of their number, Prynne, a barrister, and bencher of Lincoln's Inn, within the clutches of Laud; and he was sentenced to stand twice in the pillory; to lose his ears; to be disabled from his pro-

fession; to be imprisoned for life; and to pay £5000 to the king.

After such brutality, no astonishment need be felt that the Puritans, and their immediate successors, the Nonconformists, should be viewed by the "lovers of pleasure" with contempt; and dealt with, as neither men of taste, nor of letters; as unable to defend themselves; as, in short, imbecile precisians, and "fair game for the laughers." The time came when persecuting malice could only reach them in some such form.

Yet, how stands the truth of the case? Were they such? No, verily. After all that enmity can devise, they were among the best educated men in the nation;—scholars trained principally at Cambridge and Oxford.* Many of them were fellows of colleges; a large number were gentlemen by birth; many of good estate; and some of them, as the Earl of Kent, Arthur Hildersham, and Herbert Palmer, men of family and rank.

Not only did the nobility and gentry receive them, when "cast out," into their houses, but, when reading the Lives of Dr. Preston, John Dod, Richard Rothwel, Philip Henry, Dr. Owen, Baxter, Oliver Heywood, John Howe, and Dr. Bates,

* Those violent lay-Puritans, Prynne and Bastwick, were no exception; Prynne, was a commoner of Oriel College, Oxford; and Bastwick, was of Emanuel College, Cambridge.

you cannot but observe with whom they associated; where they visited; by whom they were esteemed. Some of them consorted often with princes; and all with the best of the aristocracy; visiting at the noblest mansions, and enjoying the most refined religious society of their times. *Dr. Jacomb*, of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and Emanuel College, Cambridge, and ejected from St. Martin's, Ludgate, London, was received into the family of that "excellent, pious, and devout lady, the Countess Dowager of Exeter." *Richard Stretton*, of New College, Oxford, the ejected from Petworth in Sussex, resided with Lord Fairfax, at his seat in Yorkshire. *Thomas Rosewell*, of Pembroke College, Oxford, ejected from Sutton Mandevil, in Wiltshire, resided many years in the family of the "good old Lady Hungerford." *Samuel Beresford*, a native of Shrewsbury, and brought up at Cambridge, after his ejection from St. Werburgh's, in Derby, retired to Shifnall, in Shropshire, and died at Weston, the seat of "the religious Lady Wilbraham." *John Bryan*, of Emanuel College, and Peter House, Cambridge, ejected from St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, and whose portrait, formerly Job Orton's, and never yet engraved, adorns my library, was domestic chaplain to the Earl of Stamford. *Thomas Gilbert*, of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and ejected from

Edgmond, in Shropshire, was a frequent visitor at Lord Wharton's. *John Flavel*, of University College, Oxford, and ejected from St. Clement's, Dartmouth, in the preface to his "Mount Pisgah," not only addresses it to the Earl and Countess of Sutherland, but shows his acquaintance with those noble, and very excellent persons.

These are merely specimens, capable of large additions, both from Puritan and Nonconformist biography. I have not boastfully set them before you, but as showing how God honoured those who honoured *him*. They teach, however, the absurdity of being influenced by the "contempt of the proud," and how unnecessary it is to feel shame, as if an association with Nonconformity involved something essentially vulgar; or was, at least, at variance with the elegancies of refinement, and good taste. Who had a finer relish for everything elegant, than Milton? But Mr. Macaulay says, upon what authority does not appear, "He was not a Puritan." The evidence is the contrary, both from the best narratives of his life, and his own controversial writings; writings which, to borrow Mr. Hayley's appropriate phraseology, "blaze intensely with Puritanical zeal." Dr. Symmons says, that his productions "were, unquestionably, the most learned and able on the Puritan

side of the controversy." Was not Milton an Independent?

There must have been something singularly impressive in the Puritans to have led that truly great and polished man, John Howe, to notice them as he did in his "Consideration of a Preface relating to Occasional Conformity." Their spirit had much in it, he writes, "of the spirit of primitive Christianity; such largeness of mind! such reverence of what bears any divine stamp and signature upon it, undefaced! such benignity even towards those by whom they suffered!"

LETTER IX.

'Shooting is an exercise of health, a pastime of honest pleasure. A man's wit, sore occupied in earnest study, must be as well recreated with some honest pastime, as the body, sore laboured, must be refreshed with sleep, and quietness, or else it cannot endure long."—*Roger Ascham.*

'He that views the ancient ecclesiastical canons, shall find hunting to be forbidden to churchmen, as being a turbulent, toilsome, perplexing recreation; and shall find angling allowed to clergymen, as being a harmless recreation, a recreation that invites to contemplation, and quietness."—*Isaac Walton.*

THE better to show you to what an extent misrepresentation has been carried against Puritans and Nonconformists, I will confine your thoughts, in this letter, to their *recreations*. For as to these, or rather the alleged want of them, they have, as in other cases, and for evil purposes, been basely caricatured. Not only have they been maligned as without learning, but as scarcely human; as persons whose religion prevented the use of God's bounty; rendered them blind to every attraction of taste, scenery, and science; and drove them, without regard to health or comfort, into a gloomy and misanthropic solitude.

Now the evidence *against* such inuendoes is pretty full; and, by exhibiting the falsehood of what has been said, and written to their prejudice, in such a matter as this, you will easily draw the inference as to other things, where the practicability of contradiction is not now so easy. My motive for selecting this topic will thus be apparent.

They were, it is true, hard students. They were scholars, some of them profound ones. They manifested, moreover, a humble, self-denying, and exalted piety. Nevertheless, they were men of "like passions with others;" and not a few of them, as is said of a celebrated Cambridge tutor, the Rev. W. Perkins, a Puritan, "of a cheerful nature, and a pleasant disposition."

It is stated of the Rev. ROBERT DURANT, ejected from Crowle, in Lincolnshire, and of ancient family, that his behaviour was always that of a gentleman, and few could exceed him "in a sweet mixture of humility and courteousness." A Puritan, the Rev. H. GELLIBRAND, of Trinity College, Oxford, was remarkable for his scientific pursuits, and is believed to have discovered the variation of the magnetic needle. The Rev. JOHN RAY, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, F.R.S., and one of the most distinguished English naturalists and botanists, was an ejected Noncon-

formist. That noted Puritan, the Rev. RICHARD TAVERNER, a member of both universities, is famous for the knowledge of music: as is that ejected worthy, the Rev. JOHN HUTCHINSON. A Scotch divine of great excellence, the Rev. JOHN LIVINGSTONE, born in 1603, when reviewing his Life, observes that, one of the two recreations, (hunting was the other,) he was in danger of being taken with, and which he found enticing, was singing in concerts of music; in which he had some skill, and took great delight.

A like witness is true of many others. They considered the harp and making sweet melody, the language is Matthew Henry's, as "innocent and allowable diversions, if soberly, and moderately, and modestly used." The rule which Dr. Beveridge, the learned Bishop of St. Asaph, laid down in his "Private Thoughts;" resol. 5, concerning his "Actions,"—to mingle recreations with business, so as to further his business by his recreations,—was strictly Puritanical. And so was the testimony he there bore, in one of the most beautiful passages ever written, to music.

Who were happier than the Puritans and Nonconformists? Who cultivated singing more? Had Milton no love to music when he thus described its power?

"And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce;
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness, long drawn out
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony."

Baxter notices it in proof of his success at Kidderminster, that "old feastings and gossipings" were superseded by "thanksgiving and singing psalms." Milton has memorialized the musical talents of his father, who was disinherited for attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation, in strains of surpassing beauty. And is it not undeniable, that Nonconformists have ever, as a body, paid, at least, as much attention to the cultivation of singing, as their church of England neighbours have done?

But while it is admitted that health, such was their anxiety to "redeem the time," may, not unfrequently, have had too secondary a consideration, they had, nevertheless, their moments of recreation, as well as their hours of study. Nor am I aware that they blamed either "sports or pastimes," provided they were innocent, uniformly as that notion has been entertained. On the contrary, it is easy to evince, from their writings,

that they *approved* of recreative enjoyments. It, therefore, is not true, that they either condemned the sober use of any "good creature," or regarded moderate recreation as incompatible with a life of piety. They never taught, or insinuated, so far as my knowledge goes, that even the indulgences peculiar to a state of affluence are inconsistent with the self-denial enjoined upon Christians, any more than those which are common to persons in inferior station.

Mr. Perkins, who, notwithstanding his great learning and worth, was "deprived" for being a Puritan, has noticed several times, in his instructive folios, the subject of recreations. Those writings were recommended in "Letters to a Young Clergyman," by that genuine modern Puritan, the Rev. Job Orton. As if not satisfied with expressing his sense, generally, of the lawfulness of "hunting, fishing, and fowling," Mr. Perkins thus descends to minuteness. "Recreation is an exercise joined with the fear of God, conversant in things indifferent, for the preservation of bodily strength, and confirmation of the mind in holiness. To this end hath the word of God permitted shooting, 2 Sam. i. 18; musical consort, Neh. vii. 67; putting forth riddles, Judges xiv. 12; hunting of wild beasts, Cant. ii. 15; searching

out, or the contemplation of the works of God, 1 Kings iv. 33."

That excellent man, the Rev. John Downame, son of the Bishop of Chester, and brother to the Bishop of Londonderry, was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge. He was a leading Puritan, and wrote the "Christian Warfare," for which Fuller says he is "memorable to posterity." In that ponderous work you thus read: "As the chief part of our time must be spent in taking pains, and in performing the duties of piety, and our callings, so must we allot some share thereof unto honest, and skilful recreations; as walking in pleasant places, conferences which are delightful without offence, poetry, music, shooting, and such other allowable sports, as best fit with men's several dispositions, for their comfort and refreshing."

Another distinguished Puritan, "that faithful and painful preacher of God's word, William Whately, pastor of Banbury," and trained at Christ's College, Cambridge, exhorts his readers in his "Prototypes," to "live as those that know there is another life after this, and that there be more weighty and honourable things to do, than playing and sporting. If you say, Do you condemn all use of sports, as hunting, fowling, or the like? I answer, No, I do not; but I say, Let not this in a

manner be the sum total of your employment. Let these kind of exercises have some small quantity of time for your refreshment, but spend yourselves in better things, or else you shall be censured with St. James's censure, you have lived in pleasure upon earth, and then I am sure you shall live in torment when you must leave the earth."

The celebrated "Master Edward Deering," and a learned Puritan, dilates upon the subject, in one of his "Godly Letters to Mistress B." He says that "the man of God may have true delight in the days of his vanity; the smelling of the dog, the flying of the bird, the qualities of all creatures were made for him; and he is injurious to the blood of Christ that thinks he may not use them." "All these things," he adds, "are good for our recreation, to comfort the frailty of weak bodies, and to bring refreshing to a weary spirit; which end, if we forget, and make it our pastime, and so call it, then we turn our pastime into sin."

That very learned Puritan, Dr. Whitaker of Trinity College, Cambridge, "sometimes recreated himself for his health's sake, either by shooting, or angling; and in the winter time, when he could do neither of them, refreshed himself by playing at the ingenious game of chess."

The excellent Guthrie, author of the "Christian's

Great Interest," and who died in 1665, chose fishing and fowling for his common recreations.

These are interesting memoranda of Puritan life and opinions; and you will observe that the parties were ministers. I have selected them, merely to disabuse your mind of erroneous views. They convey other impressions than those you have, naturally enough, cherished; and may serve to show you, that, although some of the Puritans were cynical enough, yet, there is no just ground for reviling the body on this account.

I do not feel it necessary either to blame, or defend their sentiments, or their conduct. I have to do only with the *facts*. I may as well remark, however, that the late Bishop Jebb, in his charge to the clergy of Limerick, at his primary visitation avowed *his* opinion, that it was inconsistent for a clergyman to "pursue the sports of the mountain, or the field," as well as to resort to the race-ground, or the theatre; or to be found at the card-table, or in the ball-room. He restricted clerical amusements to "the delights of social intercourse, the creative wonders of the pencil, the moral inspiration of the poet, and that voice of melody which transports the spirit from the visible to the invisible world." Had his lordship lived two centuries earlier, he might have stood a chance of being

honoured, either as a Puritan, or as Puritanically inclined.

In the life of another eminent Puritan, residing at Stapleford Hall, near Tarvin, in Cheshire, John Bruen, Esq., a chapter is devoted to "hunting and hawking, how far they are lawful, or unlawful;" and both are defended as "a recreation." The author of that life, and the chapter referred to, was the Rev. W. Hinde, a fellow of Queen's College, Oxford; a minister highly esteemed for his great piety, and frequent preaching. He, moreover, endured many troubles as a Puritan.

The "Divine Meditations" of Sir William Waller, a valiant Presbyterian, contain one on "Hunting," and another on "Fishing;" both as accordant with good sense as they are with Scripture.

That very rare little volume, the "Horæ Vacivæ" of John Hall, has a curious chapter on "Recreations." Hunting, tennis, shuttlecock, wrestling, bowling, shooting, chess, &c. are described and characterized. It is dedicated to a celebrated Puritan, Dr Arrowsmith.

But a more captivating or perfect picture of a Puritan, not "in the ministry," has never appeared than that of Colonel Hutchinson. "He was apt," his eloquent wife tells us, "for any bodily exercise, and any that he did became him; he could dance admirably well, but neither in youth

nor riper years made any practice of it; he had skill in fencing well, such as became a gentleman; he had a great love to music; he shot excellently in bows and guns, and much used them for his exercise; he had great judgment in paintings, graving, sculpture, and all liberal arts; and had many curiosities of value in all kinds; he took great delight in perspective glasses; and for his other rarities was not so much affected with the antiquity as the merit of the work; he took much pleasure in improvement of grounds, in planting groves and walks, and fruit trees, in opening springs, and making fish ponds: of country recreations he loved none but hawking, and in that was very eager, and much delighted for the time he used it, but soon left it off. He was wonderful neat, cleanly, and genteel in his habit, and had a very good fancy in it, but he left off very early the wearing of anything that was costly, yet in his plainest, negligent habit, appeared very much a gentleman."

Of a modern Nonconformist, the Rev. John Clark, Mr. Jay writes as follows. And do we not know, that, in its general tone and description, the paragraph will apply to many others? although perhaps their dissent jaundices observers, if it does not produce blindness.

"Mr. Clark had been early placed at a good grammar school, where he made proficiency in the

Latin. He became also familiar with Greek and Hebrew. He had a very strong attachment to the arts and sciences. Mechanics, astronomy, electricity, chemistry, music—these were his delight, and employed the moments he could save from his secular, and sacred engagements. In music he was a good performer on several instruments. He had a soul formed for melody. Besides an organ in the Tabernacle [at Trowbridge, where he preached,] he had two in his own mansion—one in a large staircase, surrounded with a gallery, prepared to receive it; and one in another apartment, which was entirely of his own construction, as well as a spinnet, and a violoncello. Many curious and useful works remain as proofs of his delight, and ingenuity in mechanism. It may be proved from the case of Mr. Clark, that evangelical and serious religion is not, as some suppose, necessarily combined with rudeness, and dulness. He was not a Gospel savage. In his dwelling, in his gardens, in his walks, taste and elegance were seen leading along piety, who instead of churlishly refusing their offer, accepted it with a smile, and walked hand in hand with them. You were cheerful without being vain; and serious without being sad; you were instructed and improved, while you were attracted and charmed."

When Dr. Southey selected the life of the venera-

ble John Wesley as a theme for his accomplished pen, he evidently thought he had, in the history and progress of "Methodism"—a sort of resting place between prelacy and Congregationalism—fine scope: and the work he constructed, is, as literary effort, of deep and lasting interest. If there were no other redeeming point connected with it, than that of having elicited the "Observations" of the late Rev. Richard Watson, there would be little to regret, except for its author—that he should have known no better. Those "Observations" are so acute, and so dignified; not to say conclusive and eloquent, as to have led George the Fourth, it is said, to exclaim, after seeing them—"Oh! my poor poet laureat! My poor poet laureat!"

I have made this allusion to a book so well known, more particularly to notice that its writer asserted, among other bold things, that Methodism discouraged, if it did not absolutely prohibit, accomplishments that give a grace to life: and, that it separated its followers from society.

The statement was thus met by Mr. Watson. "If Mr. Southey means the cultivation of amenity and courtesy of manners, general literature, the fine arts, music, and similar accomplishments, he was never more mistaken: if he means dancing, as I suspect, he is right, and I do not think we need an

apology. 'It separated them from general society.' True, from the intimacies of indiscriminate society; but with general society they have ever mixed when any purpose of public usefulness was to be attained. This charge results from Mr. Southey's defective views of real religion. There is, in our Lord's words, '*a world;*' persons whose habits, if not immoral, are wholly earthly and trifling: and from an *intimacy* with that '*world,*' every true Christian, by whatever name he is known, is called to separate himself, except when he mixes with it to enlighten its errors, and correct its morals."

I will conclude with a passage from the pen of a Puritan, which no criticism can assail; its touching and unrivalled beauty has been felt by thousands, who, for party purposes, have been represented as without either taste, refinement, or learning. Nonconformists may sympathize with the Rev. J. Foster's cogitations, as indulged by a reflective Protestant in one of our ancient, splendid ecclesiastical structures;* but they know what poetry is, and can enjoy it.

* See "An Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance," by John Foster, pp. 69—73, 2nd ed.

Sir James Mackintosh justly described Mr. Foster, as one of the most profound, and eloquent writers that England has produced.—Life of Sir James Mackintosh, vol. i. page 371.

" — Let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voic'd quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heav'n before mine eyes."

LETTER X.

"Though the writings of the Puritans are prolix, and, according to the fashion of their age, rendered rather perplexed than clear, by multiplied divisions, and subdivisions; yet they are a mine of wealth, in which any one who will submit to some degree of labour, will find himself well rewarded for his pains."—*Mr. Wilberforce.*

"They laboured, and we are entered into their labours. Think of their self-denial, their early risings, their strenuous diligence, their long, and profound, and exhausting applications. See their proficiencies. Look over the catalogues of their works. Take down their quartos and folios."—*Rev. W. Jay.*

I MIGHT have easily added to the list of excellent persons already mentioned, as evidential of the injustice and ignorance so conspicuous in most writers who have noticed the Puritans and Nonconformists. The names of Viscount Say and Sele; Lord Rich, of Rochford; the Earls of Huntingdon, Warwick, and Bedford; Sir Charles Wolesley; Sir Henry Hoghton; the Ladies Bromley, Ranelagh, and Bowes; Lord Barrington; Sir Henry Ashurst; Sir John Hartopp; and Sir Thomas Abney will occur to you. And these are only a selection.

I will, however, proceed to illustrate the false-

hood of the statements which have prevailed as to the studious habits and *learning* of our predecessors; not omitting to bring down the illustrations to the present time. And, to escape the imputation of unfairness, I will exclude Dr. Lightfoot and Selden, two of the greatest scholars the world has seen, notwithstanding both were members of the Westminster Assembly; a sufficient proof, according to Anthony Wood of Puritanism.* You will see, by the exhibition, how far it is correct to represent Puritans and Nonconformists, either as unlettered, or contemners of human learning. As the untiring ardour, the solid, and great attainments of such men as Henry Ainsworth, Thomas Cartwright,† Theophilus Gale, Dr. Sibbs, Dr. Owen, Baxter, Dr. Manton, Dr. Goodwin, S. Charnock, Samuel Shaw, and John Howe, are well known, I will particularize others, with whom, probably, you have less acquaintance.

Richard Greenham of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, studied very hard, rising every day, both winter and summer, at four o'clock in the morning. A large folio volume attests his excellencies. Samuel Hieron of King's College, Cam-

* See Ath. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 59, fol. Account of Dr. H. Wilkinson.

† For the best Life of Cartwright, see Hooker's Works by Hanbury, vol. i. p. 135 to 206.

bridge, "a most noted Puritan," is distinguished for progress in the various branches of literature. His admirable folios would perpetuate his fame, even had Bishop Wilkins and Fuller been silent respecting him. DR. PRESTON, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, was so diligent, as to render the voice of friendship needful to urge it upon him, that, as there might be intemperance in meats and drinks; so, also, there might be in studies. His quartos are numerous, and rank too high to need any recommendation. DR. GOUGE, who was chosen from Eton to King's College, Cambridge, was very laborious in his studies, sitting up late at night, and rising early in the morning. In the winter he constantly rose so long before day, as that he had always performed the exercises of his private devotions before daylight; and, in the summer time, he rose about four o'clock in the morning. If he happened to hear any at their work before he began his studies, he would say, as Demosthenes concerning the smith, that he was much troubled any should be at the works of their calling before he was at his. Two copious folios on the Epistle to the Hebrews, besides other lesser volumes, distinguish him as a divine whose attainments were very solid. DR. RAINOLDS of Corpus Christi, Oxford, because of his uncommon skill in Greek

and Hebrew, was appointed one of the translators of the Bible. He was as conversant with all arts and sciences as if he had spent his whole life in them. Bishop Hall used to say, that he was a well furnished library, full of all faculties, all studies, and all learning. Another said, he was the very treasury of erudition. DR. THOMAS HOLLAND, a native of Ludlow, in Shropshire, was of Exeter College, Oxford, and so distinguished for learning, as to be also named by King James one of the translators of the Bible now in use. HUGH BROUGHTON, born at Oldbury, in Shropshire, of Christ's College, Cambridge, was an indefatigable student, and a profound scholar; Strype says, one of the greatest scholars in Christendom in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and all Talmudical literature. THOMAS LYDIAT of New College, Oxford, signalized himself by intense application to his studies, and became almost a prodigy in good literature. RICHARD BLACKERBY of Trinity College, Cambridge, made amazing attainments in useful literature. He was considered not only an excellent linguist, but the best Hebræan in the university. During his long life, he never seemed to lose a moment in idleness. He rose early, both winter and summer, and spent the whole day in reading, meditation, prayer, and the instruction of others. DR. JOHN WILKINSON, Fellow and

Principal of Magdalen College, Oxford, was highly celebrated for his learning, and appointed tutor to Prince Henry. RICHARD VINES of Magdalen College, Cambridge, was an accomplished scholar, a perfect master of Greek, an excellent philologist, and an admirable orator. His "Works praise him." JOHN JANEWAY was educated first at St. Paul's School, where he made great progress in Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, and astronomy. From Eton, where he was the glory of the school, and the wonder of the age, he was elected to King's College, Cambridge, at seventeen. He became a Fellow. JOHN LANGLEY, of great celebrity as a scholar of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, was Prebendary of Gloucester; a great linguist and historian; a nice and exact antiquary.

It would be easy to increase the foregoing list of scholars and gentlemen, by selecting from the long catalogue of those, who, to borrow the apt description of the late Mr. Wilberforce, were "so shamefully ejected from the church" of England "in 1662, in violation of the royal word, as well as of the clear principles of justice."

For instance. EDMUND CALAMY of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, studied at the rate of sixteen hours a day. ARTHUR JACKSON of Trinity College, Cambridge, commenced there the habit, which he continued until his death, of rising at three or four o'clock

in the morning, both summer and winter. He seldom studied less than fourteen or sixteen hours in the day. WILLIAM BAGSHAW of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, passed much of his time in his closet, sitting up late, and yet rising early. He was so diligent a reader, that there were few books in his library, which was not small, but what he had read through, and marked with his pencil. SAMUEL OGDEN of Christ's College, Cambridge, and ejected from Mackworth, in Derbyshire, had a genius that led him to excel in all the parts of refined literature. He was a good linguist. He wrote pure Latin; could read any Greek author currently with English, at first sight; was also well acquainted with Hebrew. He was a good mathematician. He was a grea lover of music, both vocal and instrumental; and was versed in natural philosophy. He took great delight in poetry, especially Latin, even to his old age. He had considerable knowledge in anatomy, physic, and botany. JOHN QUICKE of Exeter College, Oxford, the author of the Synodicon, used, when in health, to be in his study at two o'clock in the morning. DR. TUCKNEY, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Regius Professor of Divinity, was an eminently pious and learned man; and an indefatigable student. WILLIAM BRIDGE, Fellow of Emanuel College,

Cambridge, was no mean scholar, and a very hard student. He rose at four o'clock winter and summer. NATHANIEL BALL of King's College, Cambridge, was noted for his accuracy in the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French languages. He compiled a Chaldee Grammar. He rose very early in the morning, and if the service of God did not call him away, he was, on a moderate computation, not less than ten hours out of the twenty-four in his study, for thirty years together. JOSEPH TRUMAN of Clare Hall, Cambridge, was so remarkable for long and hard study, that it was common among the scholars to say—Such a thing is as true as that Truman is in his study. He allowed himself but three hours sleep, and very little recreation.

In Scotland it was the same. The famous JAMES DURHAM so gave himself to reading and meditation, as often to forget his meals. The no less celebrated SAMUEL RUTHERFORD, usually rose by three o'clock in the morning; and spent his whole time in reading, writing, praying, catechizing, visiting, and other duties belonging to ministerial employment. Principal BAILLIE, born at Glasgow, in 1599, plied his studies so hard as to attain the knowledge of twelve or thirteen languages.

But let this suffice. Were these, I ask, unlettered men, and contemners of human learning? Let their slanderers learn to blush. Steady as have been the efforts to degrade them, and to ridicule them for deficiencies in good taste, you will find, upon investigation, that, to adopt a phrase of Dr. Eachard's, they were no "illiterate mumblers;" and that they did not even perpetrate such "discourses" as those, by which that caustic writer sets forth "the grounds and occasions of the contempt of the clergy." On the contrary, the Puritans and Nonconformists were "the prevailing, and influential spirits of the age. It was by the fervid enthusiasm which breathed throughout their published writings, and spoken addresses, that the whole nation was electrified."*

Admit their quaintness, and, at times, even odd conceits; but it would be impolitic and unjust to represent such things as if peculiar to *them*.

* See The Handmaid; or the Pursuits of Literature and Philosophy considered as subservient to the Interests of Morality and Religion. By the Rev. J. Davis, B. D., Rector of Gateshead, &c. p. 96, 12mo, 1841; a charming book.

The Rev. Edward Bickersteth, Rector of Watton, characterizes the Puritans and Nonconformists, as "a class of divines whose writings remain imperishable monuments of sanctified talent, *learning*, and piety."—The Christian Student, p. 285, 2nd ed.

The very same obliquities, to say no more, which may be selected as the "spots" of Puritanism, may be instanced as covering, not only Bishops Latimer and Andrews, and Dr. Donne, but a host of conforming clergymen. Enough, however, has appeared to show the high estimate placed by good judges upon the *books* of the parties I defend; and I am not aware that it can be lowered. Depend upon it, *their* "spots" are much obscured, if not hidden, by rays of surpassing splendour.

Your estimate of the eminent persons in question will, after all, be very imperfect, unless you keep in view the *times* in which their laborious exertions were made. Instead of the quiet and uninterrupted peace so desirable for literary pursuits, they were continually harassed; for then was "the height of the power, and persecution of the bishops." One of their number, the Rev. John Angier, of Denton in Lancashire, trained at Emanuel College, Cambridge, and whose life by his son-in-law, the venerable Oliver Heywood, cannot be read too often, has given, in his "Help to better Hearts for better Times," a volume of extreme rarity, the following touching narrative. You may see in it, as in a glass, the abode of many a Puritan and Nonconformist.

"Though I might not run the race of one year at Ringley Chapel, whither I was first called; and

in that imperfect year was twice inhibited; though in nine or ten years at Denton Chapel, I preached not above two separate years (to my best remembrance,) without interruption, and in that time was twice excommunicated; though Sabbath assemblies were sundry times distractedly and sorrowfully broken up, and my departure from habitations and people often forced, no means left in sight of return; yet, through the fervent prayers of the church, (whereto these afflictions were apparently serviceable,) God was graciously and effectually moved, continually to renew liberty, as they continually interrupted it: they shut, and God opened; they shut, and God opened; till God would be no more troubled with them, but took the keys of power out of the hands of upstart, proud Shebna, to give them to outed, despised, faithful Eliakim. And no less cause have I to set a star of observation (to advantage God's praise,) upon Divine Providence preserving, to admiration, my house, study, and papers, when some of Prince Rupert's plundering forces passed nigh the door, in the year of our heavy visitation, when his whole army entered Stockport, within three miles of us, and no opportunity left for removing anything, nor any durst stay in the house. To Him we committed all by prayer, and, at our return, we found nothing

wanting, not a door opened, not a window broken. Though in times past scarce a year passed but I was driven from home, yet, in these troubles, I have rested at home, through the multitude of his mercies all the time, save one month when the prince's forces ranged, and reigned in our country."

It was in such seasons of "rebuke and blasphemy," when society was torn asunder by ecclesiastical tyranny, and civil commotions, that these holy men, bent upon the highest welfare of their own, and future generations, seemed deaf to the surrounding din. They lived as upon the confines of the invisible world; their treasure was in heaven; and, as if imbued with the spirit of its pure inhabitants, they were habitually absorbed in its anticipated, and certain pleasures.

Such were the persons who were systematically reviled; and with hundreds, nay thousands more, persecuted, and driven out of the church of England by the established hierarchy. Observe how Baxter records his own share in the ejection. The passage occurs in the poem he styled "The Resolution." You will not fail to notice where his eye first rested. He is addressing God.

> "Must I be driven from my *books*,
> From house, and goods, and dearest friends?
> One of thy sweet and gracious looks,
> For more than this will make amends.

The world 's thy book : there I can read
Thy power, wisdom, and thy love ;
And thence ascend by faith, and feed
Upon the better things above.
I 'll read thy works of providence :
Thy Spirit, conscience, and thy rod,
Can teach without book, all the sense,
To know the world, myself, and God.
Few *books* will serve, when thou wilt teach.
Many have stolen my precious time :
I 'll leave my books to hear thee preach.
Church-work is best when thou dost chime."

No admirer of the Puritans and Nonconformists need shrink from asserting their *literary attainments*, any more than their studious diligence. Three of the most distinguished orientalists of their day, and each a useful coadjutor with Dr. Walton, the lettered prelate of Chester, in the London Polyglott, were, Patrick Young, Thomas Cawton, and Richard Heath. Patrick Young was of the Universities of St. Andrew's and Oxford, and a Puritan of the most profound and varied erudition. Mr. Cawton, of Queen's College, Cambridge, to whom Castell's Lexicon Heptaglotton also owed much, was of the same despised body, and died at Rotterdam. Mr. Heath, of Christ's College, Cambridge, was ejected in 1662, from St. Alkmond's, Shrewsbury.

It was one of the ejected, Matthew Pool, of Emanuel College, Cambridge, author of the

"Synopsis Criticorum," and who usually rose for study at three or four o'clock in the morning, who originated a plan, of which he published his "Model," in a 4to pamphlet, 1658, for maintaining young men of ability, studiousness, and piety, at the universities, in the study of divinity. Such was the zeal of this good man, in the prosecution of the object, that about £900 a year was procured for the purpose. Dr. Sherlock, Dean of St. Paul's, was one of those who were educated on this foundation. But the design, admirable as it was, was quashed at the Restoration.

Another of the ejected worthies, the Rev. Edward Reyner, of Lincoln, published a 12mo "Treatise of the Necessity of Human Learning for a Gospel Preacher, and the Benefits of Learning in all Ages."

It was a lay-member of the "Assembly of Divines," Edward Leigh, Esq., M.A., of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, who wrote several valuable books still helpful to critical students of the Bible; and also a "Treatise of Religion and Learning," evidential both of its importance, and necessity.

They were Puritans and Nonconformists whose "learning," as well as "loyalty and morals," was vindicated by the Rev. Samuel Palmer, afterwards a Conformist. And, Mr. Hallam observes justly, that "a prodigious reach of learning, distinguishes

the theologians of the first half of the seventeenth century." Mr. Wilberforce expressed his sense of "the high obligations we owe to dissenters for many excellent publications."

It is a curious circumstance, that common-placing, the usual accompaniment in days of yore, of a literary taste, was, at one period, as you may see in Dr. Parr's "Life of Archbishop Usher," "affirmed to be flat Puritanical."

No inconsiderate survey, and still less ignorant incompetency, led one of the most eloquent advocates of learning, and a learned ministry, that ever lived,—the astonishing Baxter,—to make a challenge which admits but of one reply: and his range was, professedly, very limited. "Compare," said he, "the writings, and ministerial labours of Conformists, and Nonconformists. Some pious Conformists have done extraordinarily well; especially Dr. Barrow, Dr. Tillotson, Dr. Patrick, Dr. Stillingfleet, Dr. Tennison, &c. And is there not the same spirit of wisdom, piety, and peace in the writings of Anthony Burgess, Mr. Charnock, Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Mr. Howe, Richard Alleine, Joseph Alleine, Thomas Gouge, Mr. Swinnock, Dr. Gilpin, many volumes of the Monthly Lectures, Mr. Flavel, Mr. Steele, Mr. Ambrose, and many more?"

To these may be added his own voluminous

writings. It is delightful to observe how in his "Dying Thoughts," written for his own use, in the latter times of his corporal pains and weakness, he dwells upon his "sweet leisure, and meet books." "I must depart," is his language, "not only from sensual delights, but from the more manly pleasures of my studies, knowledge, and converse with many wise and godly men, and from all my pleasure in reading, hearing, public and private exercises of religion, &c. I must *leave my library*, and turn over those pleasant books no more. I must no more come among the living, nor see the faces of my faithful friends, nor be seen of men. Houses, and cities, and fields, and countries, and gardens, and walks, will be as nothing to me. I shall no more hear of the affairs of the world, of man, or wars, or other news, nor see what becomes of that beloved interest of wisdom, piety, and peace, which I desire may prosper," &c.

Did the successors of these eminent men slacken in their regard to sound literature? A moderate acquaintance with their biography, (I will only mention that of Matthew Henry,) will convince you that they did *not*. You may there see the sacrifices many made for the attainment of learning; their support of academies, and able tutors; and their care at ordinations to ascertain the

acquirements made by candidates for the ministry. At a still later period, the inimitable Cowper, (whose irony in the "Task," as to Puritans, had been spared, had he not been affected by those false impressions which I am endeavouring to rectify,) in a letter to Mr. Unwin, describes Mr. Bull, a dissenting minister at Newport Pagnell, as "a man of letters, and of genius:" and of Mr. Greatheed, another dissenting divine, he remarks, when writing to Lady Hesketh, that he is "a man of letters and of taste."

It was of Nonconformists that the late Bishop Watson, addressing his Grace of Canterbury, in his "Theological Tracts," and praising the clergy, said, "I include the dissenting clergy, whom I cannot look upon as inferior to the clergy of the establishment, either in learning or morals." A country clergyman also addressing the Metropolitan at Canterbury, in a quarto pamphlet, observed, "Let any man read over the distinguished names of a Doddridge, Chandler, Kippis, Foster, Watts, Lardner, Robertson, Blair, Maclaine, and others that might be mentioned, and determine, whether dissenters do not keep an even pace with churchmen as virtuous men, able scholars, and sound divines." It was a bishop, Shipley of St. Asaph, who said, in the House of Peers, that the dissenting clergy deserved the esteem of that

house, for their science, their literature, their continual study of the Scriptures, and for their excellent writings in defending, or teaching common Christianity. And, the gentle Porteus, Lord Bishop of London, in one of his charges to that diocese, noticed that the evidences of the Christian religion, had "been stated to the world with great ability, and force of argument, by men of the first distinction for talents and learning in this country, both in the establishment, and *out of it.*" *

It is worthy your observation how large a proportion of publications by Nonconformists are introduced into Bishop Watson's "Theological Tracts." Nor should you forget, that the three most widely circulated books in the English language, were written by dissenters,—"Paradise Lost," "Robinson Crusoe," and the "Pilgrim's Progress."

* Works, vol. vi. pp. 275, 276.

That very valuable family almanac, entitled the "Congregational Calendar," price only a shilling, contains, for the year 1842, not merely a "Brief Notice of the Congregational Denomination," but "Historical Testimonies to the Character of the English Independents."—pp. 65—70.

The Congregational Union of Ireland also, has published an instructive statement of Congregational or Independent principles, with an appendix, containing testimonies to the character of the denomination, and in favour of its principles.

When it is considered that Nonconformists have been excluded from the national universities, it will be evident that they have discovered, at least as high an estimate of knowledge, by its patient pursuit, and even costly acquisition elsewhere; as real a love of learning, as those have done who, by conformity, have enjoyed the monopolized privileges at Cambridge and Oxford. The establishment and use of academies by dissenters, and their increasing attention to those institutions, is an answer to every objector; and proves that

"In vain ye limit mind's unwearied spring."

A history of dissenting colleges would include two bright ornaments of the national church,—Archbishop Secker, and Bishop Joseph Butler. Dr. Knox, in his "Winter Evenings," expressed his belief, that it was a very happy circumstance for Secker, that he was educated in a dissenting academy, under so good a tutor as the Rev. S. Jones, and attributes much of his future eminence to it.

As to our own times, look at the late venerable Dr. Carey, a Congregational dissenter, a missionary to India from the Baptists, and president of the Serampore College, Bengal. The public testimony borne, during his life, by the Governor General, to his literary merit, and achievements, as

well as Christian worth, is well known. At a meeting, however, of the Asiatic Society, Bengal, soon after his death in 1834, the Bishop of Calcutta honoured himself, by proposing, and it was unanimously carried, that the following minute should be perpetuated. "The Asiatic Society cannot note upon their proceedings, the death of the Rev. Willliam Carey, D.D., so long an active member, and ornament of this institution, distinguished alike for his high attainments in the original language, for his eminent services in opening the store of Indian literature to the knowledge of Europe, and for his extensive acquaintance with the sciences, the natural history and botany of this country, and his useful contributions, in every branch, towards the promotion of the objects of the Society, without placing on record this expression of their high sense of his value and merits as a scholar, and a man of science, their esteem for the sterling and surpassing religious and moral excellencies of his character, and their sincere grief for his irreparable loss."

Contemplate my esteemed friend, the Rev. Dr. Morrison, F.R.S., &c., &c., the first Protestant missionary to China, who also died in 1834, at Macao. Not only is he regarded by competent judges as the greatest Chinese scholar Europe ever produced, but he accomplished more for its lite-

rature, than has been effected by any other person. The second volume of his life contains critical notices of his vast literary labours, by Professor Kidd. I may just remark, that a sermon Dr. Morrison preached and printed in China, contained, as an appendix, a Dissertation "on Primitive Churches." The appendix was published in the "Congregational Magazine," for May, 1834, and furnishes you with a good account of Congregationalism, or Independency. This valuable document is, likewise, appended to the Doctor's "Life."

Ponder the eloquence of the pulpit. Does not the mind, when it would select the best example of taste and piety, united in their most impressive combinations, turn to that uncompromising Nonconformist, and my lamented friend, the late Rev. Robert Hall, as naturally as, the needle to the pole?

And, so far as the course has proceeded, I see nothing to fear from a comparison of the volumes of "The Congregational Lecture," with those that bear the names of Boyle and Bampton, Warburton and Hulse.

To close these instances, there are "Prize Essays:" and, after severe competition, including clergymen of the Anglican church, as well as others, the first and second prizes for the "Essays

on Christian Missions," were lately awarded to two dissenting ministers,—both Independents,—Dr. Harris, and Mr. Hamilton of Leeds.

Nevertheless, were you to form a judgment from not a few church of England writers, such is either their ignorance, or something worse, you would conclude, that the hierarchy had engrossed not the two universities only, but all the learning, and scholarship, and taste in the empire.

Although, at present, the exclusion of dissenters from the universities is complete, and strenuously maintained, the time, I trust, will arrive, when it will be otherwise; or, at all events, when the possessors of those advantages, will feel ashamed of taunting their fellow-countrymen with insufficiency in learning, and yet shut them out from, what ought to be, the national means of its acquisition. You cannot, however, be blind to the testimony thus incidentally borne to Nonconformist integrity. Is it not, *primâ facie*, an evidence in favour of dissenters? Would so large a part of the community exclude themselves from patronage, and a university education, valuing learning, as I have demonstrated they do, did not conscience prevail, against the selfishness of indifference, the charm of rewards, and the ambition of mere worldly honours?

LETTER XI.

"The contempt that is cast upon the meanest Christian boundeth upwards again, and in the last resolution reflecteth even upon God himself, and upon his Christ."—*Dr. Robert Sanderson, Lord Bishop of Lincoln.*

"I am a stranger even at home; therefore, if the dogs of the world bark at me, I neither care, nor wonder."—*Dr. Joseph Hall, Lord Bishop of Norwich.*

THE more you consider the great, and good men who have been, and still are, stigmatized because Puritans and Nonconformists, the more you will be struck with the malevolence and misrepresentation which have been arrayed against them. The more too, you will see the importance of studying what history and modern publications furnish in reference to them impartially; of weighing statements with thoughtful care; and of viewing the whole in the light of Scripture. You should particularly observe the *character** of their traducers. "Now I am near my end, having lived to the sixty-eighth year of my age," said the venera-

* Dr. Vaughan, in his invaluable History of England under the House of Stuart, has illustrated this, in an examination of Hume's account of the Puritans, p. 276.

ble Baxter, "I see so great a difference in holiness, justice, and charity between those commonly reviled for worshipping God, but as the apostles did, and those that hate, and persecute them, as greatly helps me in believing that there is a Saviour, and a Sanctifier, and a heaven for the faithful, and a devil that deceives the rest, and a hell that will receive them, which is even visibly begun on earth."

The same indefatigable writer in his "Church History of the Government of Bishops, and their Councils," has some seasonable observations upon "what history is credible, and what not," which led him to notice how *differently* men are estimated, according to the taste of the writer—and hence, the importance of discrimination in the reader. "Melchior Adam," said he, "gathereth his history of lives from the pens of those that most intimately knew the persons; what able, holy, laborious, and excellent servants of God were Calvin, Beza, Danæus, Knox, and many such described by Adamus, and in the judgment of those that were their most knowing observers. But, what vile, rebellious wretches were they, in the judgment of Dr. Heylin, and such as he." "I must say," he adds, "as in God's sight, that in my own acquaintance, I have found that sort of men whom Dr. Heylin, and such others reproach as Presbyterians, and

Puritans, to be the most serious, conscionable, practical, sober, and charitable Christians that ever I knew."

The clerical historian of English poetry brands the Puritans, as "prejudiced and peevish." Not that they really were so; but because they reprobated the atheism and wickedness of Christopher Marlowe, whom Warton seems to have admired; and because, Warton *hated* them, and Calvinists; not understanding as Mr. Chalmers, whom I well knew, has drily remarked in his Biographical Dictionary, "that his own church, and every pure church has many doctrines in common with them."

In pursuing my design, it will not be necessary so much to mark the low buffoonery of Ben Johnson; or the railing accusations of Anthony Wood; or the profane wit of Butler; or even the specious caricatures of the Scotch Novels;* as to ponder infallible verities. These furnish the best, and surest explanation; and by demonstrating how the "excellent of the earth," have been always treated, will sufficiently guard you against a hasty, and erroneous judgment; will instruct you what,

* Dr. M'Crie's "Review of Tales of my Landlord," will well reward study. It is an article, indeed a book, of singular adaptation and ability. See his Miscellaneous Writings, pp. 247—250, ed. 1841.

as your own consistency is manifested, you may expect; and will, moreover, reveal to you sources of "sweet solace." "Marvel not, my brethren," said an affectionate apostle, afterwards the victim of persecution, "if the world hate you." And, our Lord, addressing his disciples, thus taught them: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hateth you." In Jeremiah's time, "the precious sons of Zion," though "comparable to fine gold," were esteemed as "earthen pitchers." And the apostle Paul, writing of himself, and his fellow Christians, says emphatically—"We are made as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things."

Such has ever been the policy of "the world:" and no unimportant part of the inimical operation has been to arrest the depraved fancy of mankind by burlesquing those who "fear God," and maintain the supremacy of his truth; to create prejudice against them by distorted and hurtful statements; to prevent, and destroy esteem by invective, and sarcasm, and the undue exhibition of mere defects; in short, to condemn as evil, insignificant foibles, and harmless peculiarities. Such "malignants," as Baxter calls them, make no allowance for natural temperament, or mental con-

stitution, or the force of education, or the darkness of the times, or so much as the irritating excitements of ill-treatment, and oppression. It is as if their chief ambition, like that of the unbelieving Jews in apostolic times, were to make the minds of the people "evil affected against the brethren"—those who have long "since fallen asleep," as well as those who "remain."

But, does it not discover the height of malice to be ever attacking, not only those around them, quite as virtuous, and conscientious, and well-informed as themselves, but the character of the dead? And is it not generally true, that those who show a triumphant resentment in proclaiming the errors of others (admitting them to *be* errors, for very often they are not so) and concealing, if not sullying their virtues, are themselves under the dominion of irreligion, perhaps of vice? High pretensions for the honour of religion may, no doubt, attend such busy zeal; but its real character is betrayed by the circumstance, that, although dormant towards evil, it burns with fury against "godliness," particularly if it abound in holy duties, and opposition to the "pomps and vanities of the world."

It seldom seems to occur to the utterers of slander, and not always to others, how frequently Christianity itself has been attacked, and even the

lives of "the saints" destroyed, so far as intent could go, under the most sanctimonious pretences. Our Lord assured his apostles that the time would come that "whosoever *killed* them would think *he did God service*." It was against some of those distinguished men that the Jews "stirred up the devout and honourable women," and "the chief men of the city, and raised persecution, and expelled them out of their coasts."

Some of the grossest calumnies ever published against dissenters, received the sanction, not long ago, of the Bishop of London; but his lordship had to endure a "Remonstrance," from the pen of Charles Lushington, Esq., a member of the church of England. The effect I know not, but I hope it was salutary.

That occasion is, sometimes, given to sneering observers for the indulgence of their propensities, cannot be denied. There is to be seen, in persons professing religion, a want of good manners; the absence, where it might be expected, of a gentlemanly taste, and a gentlemanly bearing; perhaps an uncouth awkwardness, as if politeness were sinful conformity to the world. It was so among some of the Puritans. It has been so, and is so still, among their successors; and in other communities too. But, *wherever* the

"offence" is found, it can, as rightly viewed, be only deplored; and ought to be guarded against.

There is no virtue in bad taste, or in eccentricities, and whims, whether in speech, looks, or dress; and affectation has been fitly described as "loathsome." Whenever flaws of the kind referred to appear among Christians, the "watchers" seize upon them with the greediness of vultures; they drag them into sight; and hide all excellencies.

In a beautiful sermon on "the Saviour honoured in his people," Mr. Jay has touched this subject with his usual felicitousness: and, although he confines his expostulation to that class of defects which give colour to an objection against religion as "mopish and melancholy," it might easily be extended. "Would you," he asks, "confirm a prejudice so general, and so fatal as this, by long, demure faces; by sighs and groans as if you were always at a funeral; by insensibility to the beauties of nature, and indifference to the bounties of Providence?"

Now, as such individuals look and act, so they often speak. "To imperfections," says the same experienced observer, in a discourse on the death of S. Hallett, Esq., "they add disagreeableness. Instead of inviting and alluring, they check and

repulse. They seem to think that Christian seriousness consists in moroseness; and fidelity in rudeness; and deadness to the world in saying to others—Stand by thyself, come not near to me, I am holier than thou."

The venerable John Newton, adverting, in his Letters on Religious Subjects, to another division in the same school of imperfection, and having remarked, that we are not "required to refuse a moderate use of the comforts and conveniences of life, suitable to the station which God has appointed us in the world," adds, with his usual discernment, "The spirit of self-righteousness, and will-worship works much in this way, and supposes that there is something excellent in long fastings, in abstaining from pleasant food, in wearing meaner clothes than is customary with those in the same rank of life, and in many other austerities, and singularities not commanded by the word of God."

It cannot be understood too well, that "the kingdom of God is *not* meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" that apostolic counsel is this, "Be courteous."

One of Foster's Essays is upon "some of the

causes by which Evangelical religion has been rendered unacceptable to persons of cultivated taste." Without incurring responsibility for everything it contains, I have no scruple in stating my conviction, that it can hardly be read too often, or its spirit imbibed too fully.

LETTER XII.

"I am persuaded that Christ's church is everywhere founded, in every place where his Gospel is truly received, and effectually followed."—*Dr. Nicholas Ridley, Lord Bishop of London.*

"There are some who speak as if salvation entirely depended on being the member of an episcopal [the meaning is, diocesan episcopal] church; and they denounce against as many as are without its pale, anathemas scarcely inferior to those which the Pope fulminates against all those who are not of his own catholic community. These are Protestants with popish principles."—*The Christian Observer.*

You will, I think, be prepared to admit what little reason there is to be ashamed of our Puritan and Nonconformist predecessors. Besides those whose names have been mentioned, there is a countless number who would do credit to any community. As men, as scholars, and as Christians, they claim our attachment and respect; nay more, as members of "the church of God," our true and hearty love. I delight to muse upon the august assembly; their fidelity to the Redeemer; their patient stedfastness; their sublime contentment; their humble meekness; their victory over the world; their diligence, and their learning; the simplicity, seriousness, and holiness of their lives. These characteristics of primitive Christianity distinguished them: and I am not surprised that a "famous fo-

reigner," who had seen their way of living, cried out, when speaking of the words of Balaam—" Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his"—" *Sit anima mea cum Puritanis Anglicanis.*"*

Dr. Watts's Humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion, sets forth some peculiar practices of virtue and piety among the ancient Nonconformists. In proportion as you acquaint yourself with the subject in this point of view, the more fully you will enter into the sentiments already expressed; and those also, which were long ago declared by the Rev. Samuel Ogden; a man as eminent for goodness and moderation, as for his great and general learning; "To conform is to leave the society of the best, and most religious people in the land; to desert the peculiar work and sufferings of the most painful, and successful ministers. For, is not the presence of God, and his blessing more abundantly in our select assemblies, than in the public parochial congregations? By whom have the most part of the godly and sincere Christians been raised, and built up, but by the prayers, pains, doctrine, and conduct, of the Nonconformists? Shall I leave the snow of Lebanon for Kedar, and Meshech? Can I be secure of God's

* " Let my soul be with the English Puritans."—See De Foe's Discourse upon Occasional Conformity, p. 7, 4to, 1701.

grace and blessing, if I depart from the confines of Hermon, where God has made his blessings to fall? Dod, Hildersham, Ball, Angier, &c., in a word, the best men are with us."

That sprightly woman, and intelligent Nonconformist, Mrs. Savage, the eldest daughter of Philip Henry, when justly roused by the uncharitableness of a clergyman (to whom she often listened as a preacher) towards his nonconforming neighbours, addressed him in a letter of dignified expostulation. The whole is printed in her "Life," and entitled to your regard, but I refer to it on account of the following sentence: "For my own part, I freely profess, that I have seen so much sincere piety, fervent charity, and humility, practised in those I have joined with, and found such solid peace, and tranquillity in this way I have walked in, that I trust I shall never be either allured, or affrighted from it."

Nor is this to be wondered at. Stedfastness often results from experience as well as instruction; and the principles and usages of Nonconformity, if understood and practised, tend very directly to produce it. You do not find Nonconformists now, any more than formerly, taken either with Tractarian doctrines, or those other speculations which have captivated, and bewildered, and carried away so many.

The basis upon which dissent rests is strong, and those who feel the solidity of the foundation are strong, and appear to be so. The corner-stone is simple, unsophisticated obedience in all matters of religion, to the will of Christ, and that *alone*. And no power can move it.

Even in point of taste, it seems to me unwise to forego the simplicity of scriptural worship for forms and ceremonies of human origin. When you think seriously of God; of his authoritative will; the completeness of his revelation; our own accountability; and the coming judgment; who dares venture to trifle with his word; to treat it as imperfect; to attempt to mend it? still less to censure, if not unchurch *all* besides a party, how conscientious soever their subjection to the sovereign will? Yet this *is* done continually. The church of England is vaunted as the only true church: her ministers as the only true and authorized ministers: and *her* members as those alone, who are not to be numbered with heretics and schismatics; if not with Jews, Turks, and infidels. It was so heretofore when the same kind of people were struggling for the ascendancy. The conduct is, nevertheless, antichristian* upon the face of it; and being resorted to by all high-churchmen, I

* See Note K.

see no presumption in asking—Who made *them* to be rulers and judges?

It was not without reason that Dr. John Owen, once vice-chancellor of Oxford, thus wrote in 1680; in his "Considerations about Union among Protestants, and the Preservation of the Interest of the Protestant Religion in this Nation." The words are remarkable. "At the Reformation this church state"—meaning the diocesan-episcopal—"was accommodated, as was supposed, unto the interest of the nation, to obviate the evils suffered from it under the other"—the papal—"form, and render it of use unto the religion established. Yet, experience manifests that, partly from its constitution, partly from the inclinations of them by whom it is managed, other evils have accompanied, or followed it, which, until they are removed, the weakness of the Protestant interest, through mutual divisions, will remain among us."

My ever-to-be-honoured friend, and, by marriage, relative, Dr. Edward Williams, a prince among divines, in the second edition of his "Essay on the Equity of Divine Government, and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace," allotted a large space to a consideration of the nature and use of *scriptural authority*; and therein, not only gave prominence to the importance of entire submission to the Saviour as "Head of his body, the

church;" but illustrated the topics upon which some of the foregoing letters have barely touched, with remarkable clearness. The advocacy, in short, is that of abandoning for the church of Christ, those *political* props which were reared by Constantine,* and upon which a leading section of it has so long rested; and trusting alone to the presence, power, and efficiency of its glorified Lord.

The conviction seems to be spreading, that such a consummation is necessary to remove much that now *obstructs* religion; and to prevent it being made so predominantly the *secular* thing it is at present. Who can doubt that, in a vast variety of quarters, the leading considerations respecting it are only, or chiefly, those of emolument and ambition? Nor does such a consummation appear to many less necessary, for the universal diffusion of saving knowledge; and that love and union,

* "Alas!" said Bishop Lowth, "from this very era of the security, prosperity, and splendour of the Christian church, we must date the decay of the true spirit of Christianity." Visitation Sermon on the Kingdom of God, 1758.

See Archdeacon Woodhouse on the Apocalypse, pp. 191, 192, &c. to the same effect.

The sagacious Archbishop of Cambray, Fenelon, laid it down as a maxim, in his Directions for Royalty, that "when kings meddle with religion" (that is, in a way of legislation) "instead of protecting it, they place it in bondage."—Works, vol. iii. p. 531, 4to, 1787.

also, which is made, in Scripture, one of the chief evidences and attractions of Christianity. As matters stand, a certain kind of zeal, it is Hooker's beautiful phraseology, hath "drowned charity," whereas that to which Christians should aspire, is—"unfeigned love of the *brethren*;" no matter where found, or in what communion. And this squares with the Bible. You do not see inculcated *there*, unity in a liturgy, or architecture, or crosses, or candles, or ritual observances, or ceremonies. Nothing like it. "Unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God," was enforced by the first preachers of the Gospel, and it was once realized. The people "continued stedfastly in the apostles' *doctrine*, and fellowship."

The Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, one of her majesty's chaplains in ordinary, has made an effort to promote such unity that is worthy of imitation. His tract on the subject, and his preface to a reprint of one of John Howe's best pieces, are compositions which might have proceeded, such is their excellent spirit, from Archbishop Leighton. But how such charity suits the established church, which has fixed a "great gulf" between itself and all other communions, it is not for me to say. This, however, I can and do say, that in the principles of Nonconformity, there is, not only nothing to hinder union, but

everything to promote it, with *all* who "hold the Head;" as well by the interchange of pulpit services, as by every other office that can be regarded as expressive of Christian confidence and love. This has been recently demonstrated in the noble plan for union chalked out, with such glowing zeal, by Mr. James, of Birmingham; and adopted, cordially, in its principle, by the meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, at Liverpool. It has been lately exemplified, and to an encouraging extent, in an overflowing assembly of Christians and ministers of different denominations, at Craven Chapel, London.

It is delightful to dwell upon Congregationalism in this aspect; and I am happy to refer you to two publications of modern date, peculiarly rich in the illustration of it. I allude to Professor Hoppus's before-mentioned Prize Essay, and Dr. Harris on "Union, or the Divided Church made One." How the admired Jeremiah Burroughs, a Puritan and an Independent, would have rejoiced in such a development of his chosen motto. It was placed upon his study door, and is preserved in the second funeral sermon by the Rev. S. Bury, for the before named Rev. John Fairfax. "An union of affections is very consistent with a variety of opinions."

But—and mark the contrast; the passage is

from the Rev. Dr. Pye Smith's Reply to Professor Lee's Letter—"The church of England sets up claims of superiority and domination, to which, not from pride or factious humour, but solely from our subjection to the authority of Christ, we cannot submit. You can hardly help allowing, that at least we have a pretty strong appearance of reason for our difficulties, and hesitations. But your church has no feeling for difficulties, no sympathy for tender consciences. You are anxious for love and union. I honour your motive, and thank you for its utterance. But your church has few charities out of her own pale. To enjoy her union and communion, we must bring our assent and consent to all and everything in *her* terms. Other bodies of Christians respect conscientious difficulties in their brethren, and would be ashamed of requiring conformity to their modes and forms, while the great essentials of faith and holiness are preserved. Not so the church of England. She enjoins things not authorized by the New Testament, and confessedly indifferent; and she will not relax a hair's breadth, just to show her power. She rejects, as null and void, the ministerial ordination of all the other churches of the Reformation; but, upon the childish ground of episcopal transmission, and uninterrupted succession, she acknowledges the orders of

the papal church. I speak, not of persons, but of the system. You, and many, very many in your communion, I love and revere; but your ecclesiastical system is an almost perpetual exhibition of 'straining at gnats, and swallowing camels.'

"We long to hold the communion of saints, and of sister churches, in the most large and liberal manner; but she refuses; not an iota will she abate of her unscriptural pretensions. She absolutely claims 'authority in matters of faith,' the exclusive prerogative of God; and, if we ask *where* this authority is seated, it turns out to be with the king, lords, and commons! We have read, thought, and inquired, have searched the Scriptures long and carefully, and are not strangers to the records of ecclesiastical antiquity; and hence, we are unable to acquiesce in her demands. But she is inflexible. Our known harmony, upon the grand essentials of faith and holiness, shall stand for nothing, She will not admit the communion of saints, except in her own arbitrary, and man-devised way. Who, then, is guilty of *schism?* The party which insists upon terms of communion for which the word of Christ gives no sanction; or, that which declines submission to the proud, presumptuous, selfish demand,—a demand which we cannot but consider as an act of *rebellion* against Christ?"

The Oxford Tracts have rendered these sad truths still more serious; and given prominence to a dilemma also, which is too important to escape consideration. Either those productions *are* in accordance with the established church; or, they are *not*. It does not appear to me that any *via media* can be found here. If they are *not* in harmony with the right interpretation of the prayer-book, with its rubric, and canons, and homilies, wherefore is it that the proper authorities have not suppressed the heresies and rooted them out; and not, like the Bishop of London, publish the same leading doctrines; or the Bishop of Oxford, dexterously uphold the chief doers? But, if they, or anything like them, *are* in unison with the Act of Uniformity, and its satellites, can better evidence be given of the clear-sightedness, and sound Protestantism of the Puritans and Nonconformists? They are thus *shown* to have been the men of God, and valiant for the truth, which the immortal Locke, and many more, have taken them to be—"worthy, learned, pious, and orthodox divines." Weigh the extracts before given from the Edinburgh Review; consider what appears in any of the writings referred to in the preface to these letters, on the subject of Nonconformity; and then help identifying, if you can, the leading tenets of Tractarianism, with the

objections therein set forth, as reasons for further reformation and dissent.

Within the Anglican church a *sect** has sprung up, professing to evince what that church really *is;* and, in so doing, the closeness of the affinity between her and the church of Rome is made manifest. Those pious supporters of diocesan episcopacy, who concur in sentiment with the plainest teachings of the Bible, and so with the whole body of Independents, are thus placed in a situation not to be envied. Mr. Binney's remarkable sermon on "Conscientious Clerical Nonconformity," may well inspire thoughts. Nor can I contemplate such individuals, looking at the same time at Kebleism, or Newmanism, or Puseyism, or Tractarianism, call it which you will, without recurring to that portion of the Apocalypse, which elicited from Dr. Doddridge the most thrilling passage his Expositor contains. It forms a note to Rev. xiv. 11.

It can be no matter of doubt to whom the excellent Doctor refers, as those "who connive at things in the discipline and worship of *Protestant* churches, which they, in their consciences, think to be sinful remains of popish superstition, and corruption." Nor is it surprising, that a mind,

* See Note L.

so benevolent and pious as his, should have been earnest for them to keep at the greatest possible distance, from the horrible curse contained in the text upon which he annotated.

I would urge you to study the "Lectures" of the Rev. Dr. Fletcher, to know what the Roman Catholic religion is; and so what are its "principles and institutions." You will thereby understand, all the better, what is meant by the "*remains* of popish superstition and corruption." You will discern, too, the *deficiencies*, as well as the advantages of the Protestant Reformation; a theme, aptly discussed by the Rev. J. P. Dobson, in a sermon preached at Kensington, in 1828, and afterwards published. Nor will you fail to perceive that the recent pamphlet, on "The Anglo-Prussian Bishopric of St. James in Jerusalem," abounds in observations of timely importance.

LETTER XIII.

"We shall find our hearts enlarged in charity towards men, by considering the relation wherein they stand unto God, and the impresses of his image, which are stamped upon them." —*The Rev. Henry Scougal.*

"Let us all, who hold the same Head, Christ Jesus, be united together in the same spirit, and exercise mutual love and mutual forbearance. Or else, believe it, if the sheep divide among themselves, and separate and scatter, the Great Shepherd will send in those dogs or wolves among them, that will make them run together again."—*Dr. Ezekiel Hopkins, Lord Bishop of Raphoe and Derry.*

LOOKING at the present position of professed Christians towards each other; their affecting enmity and divisions; their unholy rancour; their evil speaking; their addiction to scorning; and their unseemly strife, and perverse disputings; I am, at times, ready to think that we are realizing the sayings of prophecy, because of that hatred of God, which involves hatred of each other; that we are approaching some terrific judgment; and that it is a season, when those who "fear the Lord and his goodness," should, more than ever, flee to him as a refuge. At all events, the passage referred to, Hos. ix. 7, is too striking to be over-

looked. "The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come. Israel shall know it; the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, *and the great hatred.*"

No ingenuous man surely can be insensible to the conclusion, that all Nonconformists, strong in conscious integrity, and resting upon the firm basis of inspiration, have to do, is, while loving the brotherhood, (a duty from which no Christian can plead exemption,) to cultivate, more and more, the union which subsists among themselves; to disseminate truth; to let their "moderation be known;" and to "be ready to every good work." The closer the Scriptures are attended to, the better. Indeed all Christian teaching, and union, should so rest upon the word of God, as that they may be seen to do so. And "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." The pulpit, moreover, as Dr. Vaughan has eloquently taught, must be made to bear upon the times.* This will attract

* See "The Modern Pulpit Viewed in Relation to the State of Society," by the Rev. Robert Vaughan, D.D.

Dr. Vaughan has now published his "Age of Great Cities; or Modern Society Viewed in its Relation to Intelligence, Morals, and Religion;" a volume deserving all the thought

attention. Prejudices will falter, and give way. Knowledge will spread. In proportion as Nonconformity is seen to be the refuge of piety, in that proportion will it prevail.

Having no longer to contend with those obnoxious acts of parliament, which once were distressing, the case of dissent is favourably altered. It has now more than the protection of the state. It has its sanction. It is as *lawful* to worship in the unconsecrated meeting-house, as in the majestic minster. Nay, more, the language is that of Earl Mansfield, in the House of Lords, February 4th, 1767, "Dissent is established: it is put under the protection, and is not merely under the connivance of the law." The Hon. Mr. Justice Foster, explaining the effect of the Toleration Act, observed that with regard to the special penalties inflicted by it upon persons disturbing public worship, the places for religious worship among Protestant dissenters, are put upon a level with cathedrals, parish churches, and chapels.

The charge of schism, therefore, so constantly brought against Nonconformists, appears, if made ignorantly, unworthy; if with a knowledge of facts, deserving of the severest condemnation. I

you can bestow upon it. He has looked at the principle of the Protestant Reformation, and its relation to the progress of society, with the eye of a religious philosopher.

feel unable to separate the conduct of high-churchism towards dissenters from disloyalty.

This state of things, and improvements have been made in it since the time when the judges I have quoted lived, is not misunderstood by Oxford Tractarians. It will account for many of their operations.

The monopoly so long enjoyed by the English establishment, as to marriages, and baptisms, and registrations, and, where cemeteries not parochial are found, burials too, is at an end. People can *see* that such matters, so important in civil society, are not necessarily confined to a "priesthood," so as to confer upon *it* exclusive privileges and rights; and they can see also, that, notwithstanding ill-will, and superciliousness, and even wailings, as in the case of the Vicar of Gedney, (all springing out of the preposterous fiction ycleped apostolical succession,) those rites of Christian decency can be as properly, as efficiently, and as *religiously*—why not?—performed by men of God, whom "*he* hath counted faithful, and put into the ministry," as by the most forward advocates of high church principles.

This perplexes and alarms the "bigots," so Dr. Chalmers expresses it, "of an establishment." It is intolerable. It cannot be borne. The Bible Society, which seemed to unite good men of

various denominations, is, consequently, struck at as one way of making differences more distinct. Divide and conquer, is a maxim the miscalled apostolicals, no less than infidels, understand. And it is deeply to be lamented that, in too many instances, they have by "fair speeches" succeeded; have deceived many of the "simple ones;" and shaken some "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Were it not a theme for serious grief, some of the alleged excuses for withdrawing from the Bible Society would form a subject for very ludicrous notice. Whatever *be* the reasons for a revived aversion to one of the most glorious institutions ever formed, and his Lordship of Salisbury has stated his, the Rev. Edward H. Hare's—A.M., Vicar of Barkley,—Letter to the renegade prelate fully meets them. It is entitled "The Bible the Treasury of Truth: the Bible Society not a Church, but a Handmaid and Helper to all the Churches."

The simple verity of the case, after weighing not a few attempts at mystery on the subject, is, I believe, were the instigators of the opposition to speak out, *this*,—"Our attendance at those meetings makes you dissenters of too much importance. You appear upon the platform as upon a par with ourselves; whereas we are successors of the apostles, and you are only intruders

into the ministerial office. The maintenance of this distinction is needful to our respectability, and one which it is important everybody should understand. Now, it can be done effectually only by our withdrawal. Besides, many of you are eloquent speakers, and the impression you make is injurious to us. In the eyes of the multitude, therefore, you gain an advantage to which we are parties. It cannot, must not be."

Nonconformists, much as they regret such a state of feeling, because palpably wrong, cannot interfere with it. If churchmen with whom they have, hitherto, pleasantly co-operated, will so act, because their neighbours form their own judgments upon points *they* dispute, and express opinions differing from their own, they must be left to their own way. I see no alternative. It was as piously, as wisely remarked, nearly two centuries since, by that best of men, the Rev. John Flavel, that "the Lord will have us know that he is able to maintain and carry on his counsels in the world without the wealth of rich men, the authority of great men, or the policies of wise men. He needs them not." It was not without reason that another eminent Christian, and a firm Independent, the Rev. Joseph Symonds, once Rector of St. Martin's, Ironmonger Lane, London, remarked in his "Sight and Faith,"

addressing "his Excellency the Lord General Cromwell," that at that time of day the flock of Christ was divided. "Some sheep," he adds, "are sadly hurried by the unquiet spirit, and they drive untowardly. Their anger will be their own hurt."

In the "golden period" of the church, so Mosheim calls it, when the word of God "mightily grew and prevailed," there "arose no small stir." Demetrius and the craftsmen were alarmed because Paul "persuaded and turned away much people from idolatry," the then established religion. Those real worshippers of Mammon saw that, thereby, "their craft," the making of gods, "by which they had their wealth, was in danger to be set at nought; and the temple of their great goddess Diana, despised." And this being more than they could endure, their opposition became as systematic as it was determined.

This was the natural course of a contest for *principles*, just that contest which is now in operation among Britons. A large party of Conformists is resolute for tradition, the power of the church, sacramental efficiency, and ceremonies; denouncing the Reformation, and diligently keeping Scripture in the background; or else perverting it by concealment, if not by erroneous expositions. Whereas Nonconformists, having

nothing to apprehend for Christ's true church, nor so much as distrusting his faithfulness, or power, as its Head, instead of wandering after the inventions of men, are sticking fast to the Reformation; are contending earnestly for the supremacy,* and entireness of Scripture; and, since they do not profess their faith at the command of government, but from personal conviction, are maintaining the exclusive authority of the Bible in all things pertaining to God,—for doctrine, worship, and service. As commanded, 1 John iv. 1, they "try," by that standard, teachers, and their teachings;† and let instructors appear in whatever garb, and under whatever sanction they may; and ring

* See Note M.

† Vigilance is the more necessary, because of the ease with which the force of the divine testimony may constructively be weakened, if not destroyed.

The excellent Bishop Gibson in his first Pastoral Letter—1728—says, "The Christians in particular cities and countries are everywhere in the New Testament styled churches, which *properly* denotes an assembly of persons called together in one body."

In an edition of the same "Letter," printed for F. C. and J. Rivington, booksellers to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the word "*probably*" has been substituted, either by mistake or design, for "*properly*." You will see what a difference is thus occasioned. The bishop, taking the New Testament as his guide, expressed himself with becoming decision: in accordance, in fact, with the sentiments of Congregationalists. Whereas, by the substitution effected, his lordship's "teaching" is not only got rid of, but exchanged for uncertainty and conjecture.

changes as incessantly as they may think fit upon apostolical succession, and "our church,"—if a spirit of subtlety and pride predominates; if they call for homage in religion, other than to the Saviour, they reject them. No matter how they habit themselves. If in a prophet's mantle, they quickly discover the great deceiver; and circumstances often bring it to their recollection, that when that arch adversary wished to seduce mankind, he availed himself of the gentle blandishments of the serpent.

To their principles the Independents invite attention; and Dr. Vaughan has done much to further an acquaintance with them. I refer more especially, to his incomparable volumes on "Religious Parties in England," and "Congregationalism, Viewed in Relation to the State and Tendencies of Modern Society."

It would be easy and pleasant to recommend various other publications, illustrative of the topics noticed in these letters, but the list would be too large. I should err, however, were I not to refer to those written by Dr. J. P. Smith. They are not surpassed either in tone or spirit, any more than in chaste beauty, as specimens of composition; apt and varied information; correction of reiterated mistatements, "unjust criminations," "downright untruths," and "artful perversions;" or holy ardour and counsel, in the cause of righte-

ousness. They are as follows: "On Church Discipline according to the Authority of Christ revealed in the New Testament." It formed the twentieth number of "The Library of Ecclesiastical Knowledge."—"The Necessity of Religion to the Well-being of a Nation," * a Sermon with "an appendix on the subjects at present agitated between churchmen and dissenters."—A Sermon "On the Temper to be Cultivated by Christians of Different Denominations, towards each other:" to which is is annexed "a Letter" to the Rev. Dr. Lee.—The "Protestant Dissent Further Vindicated on the Grounds of Holy Scripture, the Moral Obligations of Men, and the Liberties of Britons;" being a rejoinder to Dr. Lee.—And "The Reasons of the Protestant Religion."

In addition, I cannot but strongly recommend "Homilies for the Times; or Rome and her New Allies; a Plea for the Reformation" by the Rev. Dr. Morison. Also, "Apostolic Christianity, or the People's Antidote against Romanism and Puseyism," by the Rev. James Godkin,—a volume of singular value, as the result of intimacy with the entire subject, such as no author, not having been educated, as he was, in the Romish faith, can be expected to manifest.

* See Note N.

Mr. Godkin's association of Romanism and Puseyism is observable, and, I think, accurate. I feel it impossible to understand Dr. Pusey and his coadjutors otherwise, than as virtually, if not distinctly, abandoning the principles of Protestantism; as unceasingly inculcating popery *in* the church of England. As that church is expounded by those plausible men, the whole system becomes so unprotestantized as to bring the "*image*," at all events, of the "beast" mentioned in the Revelation before your eyes. You have to do with gross and pernicious superstitions; and these are upheld with a spirit as virulent against all other forms of Christianity than their own, as is discovered by Rome itself.

On these accounts it is the more to be regretted that so many of the excellent and learned persons who belong to the established church, and maintain and love the truths of the Reformation, should have allowed the Tractarians to deluge the land with their pestilential publications so long, with so few efforts to stem the torrent. A little, it is true, has been done by two or three prelates, Professor Hampden, the Rev. W. Goode, and a small number of others of the inferior clergy; but, comparatively, next to nothing.

How the bustle now rife is to terminate, it is not difficult to foresee. The intermediate process is not so plain. But of this we are sure, that the

King in Zion lives, and lives to "reign;" to watch over, and to prosper his own truth. "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." The time *will* come when "the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off, Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

That noble-minded woman, Mrs. Baxter, "was for universal love* of all true Christians, and against appropriating the church to a party, and against censoriousness, and partiality in religion. She was for acknowledging all that was good in Conformists *and* Nonconformists." "But," it is added, "she had much more reverence for the elder Conformists than for most of the young ones who ventured upon things which dissenters had so much to say against, without weighing, or understanding the reasons on both sides, merely following others for worldly ends, without a tender fear of sinning; especially if any young men of her own friends were inclined merely to swim with the stream without due trial of the case, it greatly displeased her, and she thought hardly of them."†

* See Note O.

† See a "Breviate of the Life of Margaret, the Daughter of Francis Charlton, of Apply, in Shropshire, Esq., and Wife of Richard Baxter, for the use of all, but especially of their kindred," 4to, 1681, p. 69.

The "universal love" thus noticed is, indeed, natural to a Christian; and, in proportion to advancement in true wisdom, it will abound. Its being a "*new* commandment," though no disparagement to the decalogue, is enough to fix attention, while it establishes the duty as one of special importance, and to be performed—for "Christ's sake."

It is consoling to know, that, notwithstanding appearances, often so distressing, there is more unity among real Christians than at first sight may appear. They are even *now*, however denominated among men, *one* in reference to the "common salvation." They all exercise "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." They all pray. They all "look at" eternal things. They are all engaged in the same spiritual conflict. They are all cheered by the same promises. The one great purpose of them all is, "to glorify God and enjoy him for ever;" and they are all destined for the same incorruptible and everlasting inheritance. In a word, they are all ONE IN CHRIST; and every inspired exhortation to love, and unity, and sympathy, and agreement, applies at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, equally to them all. How blessed would be the exemplification!

But—it is plain from experience, and observation, as well as God's word, that the *full* develop-

ment of the heavenly principle, though in itself unspeakably attractive, cannot be expected on earth; not until the Saviour's disciples meet together at his "coming:" a consummation, devoutly as it is to be wished for, which present strifes and divisions often render it exceedingly difficult to realize. They, nevertheless, WILL MEET: and meet in the divine presence. Sin will be for ever excluded. Knowledge will be complete. The society will be "made perfect." And the enjoyment will be eternal. Instead of misunderstandings, and jealousies, and haughty exclusiveness, and scowling bigotry, and hard speeches, and rash judging, there will be entire, ceaseless harmony. Heaven—that "world of everlasting light," says good Matthew Henry, "will be a world of everlasting LOVE"—the song and worship one: before the same throne: in the same temple. And—besides the glorious company of prophets and apostles, and the noble army of martyrs, there will be assembled—"a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."

THE END.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A, PREFACE, p. xiv.

IT has been common for persons inimical to dissenters to represent them, especially the Independents, as having brought the king to the scaffold. But the Diocesan Episcopalians are just as liable to the imputation. "A little acquaintance," says my lamented and excellent friend, the Rev. W. Orme, in his Life of Dr. Owen, "with the true state of things will evince, that no religious sect can, justly, be charged with the crime."—p. 66, 8vo, 1826.

This view of the matter is supported by the act of attainder passed upon the restoration of king Charles the Second.

In "A Letter to a Clergyman relating to his Sermon on the 30th of January, being a complete answer to all the sermons that ever have been, or ever shall be preached in the like strain, on that anniversary, by G. Coade, jun." 12mo, 1747, 2nd ed., it is maintained, that the death of the king was not a national act, but "merely the act of the army."—p. 66.

See also Neal's History, vol. iii. pp. 462—468, 8vo, 1822; and Dr. Vaughan's invaluable History of England under the House of Stuart, p. 464, &c.

NOTE B, PREFACE, p. xvii.

Not only have the Puritans and Nonconformists been the steady friends of monarchy, but it is well known, that they were mainly instrumental in restoring it to the Second Charles. The Revolution also was founded upon their principles, and these have been confirmed by repeated acts of parliament.

Upon the same principles too it is, that the parliamentary succession of the crown now stands.

Who were the *loyalists* in the rebellion which occurred upon the accession of George the First in 1715, when the Jacobites endeavoured to restore an attainted prince, and exclude the House of Hanover from the throne? Not the high church party. See Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. iii. p. 311. *Their* ministry was made the vehicle of *opposition* to the House of Hanover.—Bogue and Bennett, vol. iii. p. 123.

Lord Kilkerran, writing to Dr. Doddridge in 1745, the era of another rebellion, says that in Scotland the Episcopal party were Jacobites. He adds, "They not only do *not* pray for the King, but, in such terms as cannot be mistaken, *pray against* him, and his family."—Doddridge Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 448.

But the despised Nonconformists were loyal on both these occasions. "I cannot omit taking notice," says Mr. Coade, "to the everlasting honour of the different denominations of dissenters, that there was scarce a man of them to be found at that critical period—1715—but what openly declared for the House of Hanover; and were preparing to venture their lives and fortunes in its defence."—Letter, p. 80, ut supra.

In 1745, that second revolt against the House of Hanover, who rallied around the throne, with greater ardour and zeal than the dissenters? Dr. Doddridge not only exerted himself to the utmost, but went among his flock, encouraging them to enlist in the regiment forming by the Earl of Halifax.—Life by Orton, p. 210. He also addressed a circular to other dissenting ministers on the subject. See it in his Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 436, &c.

Nothing can support these representations more unanswerably, than the *addresses* which have been presented by Nonconformists to our successive monarchs, upon their accession.

I know no language sufficiently strong to express the abhorrence in which those statements, or inuendoes, which would

impugn the loyalty of dissenters, deserve to be held. And I cannot help remarking, that they were Oxford decrees that, in 1710, were, by a resolution of the House of Lords, burnt by the common hangman, "because contrary to the constitution of this kingdom, and destructive to the Protestant succession as by law established." See Coade's Letter, p. 77, ut supra. Wade's British History, p. 319.

In the correspondence of the fourth Duke of Bedford, recently published by Lord John Russell, the loyalty of Oxford university towards the House of Hanover appears to similar disadvantage. They went up with an address in 1748, "so indecent and improper," they are the words of the Duke of Newcastle, "as to create considerable demur how to proceed respecting it."—pp. 594, 595.

But, although the Oxford decrees were consigned in 1710, as we have seen, to contemptuous oblivion, Dr. Pusey has done his best to revive them, from the pulpit of the same university. I refer to a discourse delivered by him, on the 5th of November, 1837. The Edinburgh Reviewer says of it, with becoming seriousness; and who that thinks as a Protestant and an Englishman, will not agree with him?—"That a sermon should have been preached before the university of Oxford, on the day appointed for the remembrance of the deliverance of England by the Revolution of 1688, in which the preacher reversed the precedent of Balaam, and mounted the pulpit to curse, where he was appointed to bless—in which the great work of our forefathers is plainly denounced as a sin, and held up as deserving of national humiliation, instead of thanksgiving—is a phenomenon of importance and interest to those who watch the course of events."—For January, 1838, p. 396.

Flavel, an ejected worthy, knew what he said, when, in his "Tidings from Rome, or England's Alarm," he thus expressed himself—"My lords and gentlemen, here is an enemy"—Popery —"that deserves your hottest zeal, and greatest vigilance, much better than honest, *loyal* Nonconformists, who plead with God, night and day, on your behalf."—Works, vol. v. p. 490.

By no people has the scriptural injunction to "fear God," and "honour the king," been more sacredly regarded, than by the faithful body thus referred to. The queen, and her illustrious consort and family, have now a constant share in their prayers.

The creed of Congregationalists, as subjects, having been prescribed by the King of kings, cannot be improved. It is this —"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour," Matt. xxii. 21, Mark xii, 17, Rom. xiii. 7. Hence their loyalty is religious, constitutional, and steady. They have uniformly been distinguished as the friends of the throne, the Protestant faith, and the Hanoverian succession.

No class of persons in her majesty's dominions more cordially admires and approves of the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which teaches loyalty, than do the Congregationalists. They find in it an enforcement of subjection "to the higher powers," wherever Christians may dwell; a duty the more necessary for the apostle to inculcate, because the Jews had scruples as to obeying heathen magistrates. It forbids a factious, turbulent spirit in all Christians; it enjoins peaceableness; and it prescribes sound loyalty, that is, obedience to the civil power *as such*; but it has, obviously, no more relation to *church* affairs than any chapter in the book of Esther. It, moreover, justifies nothing in rulers that is unscriptural, or unlawful; nor does it involve any sacrifice of political rights. This is plain from the context, from other parts of Scripture, and from the whole conduct of the apostle Paul himself, as well as his brethren.

NOTE C, PREFACE, p. xxv.

The constant iteration of republican sentiments, as identified with Independency, is an instance of that gross unfairness which is so common, and against which every reader should

especially guard. To gain a point, *some* of a particular denomination are, by certain authors, made to answer for others, with whom, perhaps, they are confounded, or agree in certain matters only. Such writers affix to a whole body the stigma which they know belongs alone to some. The artifice is as ungenerous as it is unjust. They may as well censure all the apostles because of the sin of Judas. To the case before us the conduct thus noticed is particularly applicable, and Neal in his History met it, vol. iii. p. 121, &c.; a host of facts disprove it; and the slander ought to have been perpetually silenced. Had there been even more republicans, among the Puritans and Nonconformists, than there were, it could be no matter of surprise, to any one who regards the doings of the then ruling powers, both in church and state.

A similar degree of criminality is become affectingly common as to other matters. In order to produce an unfavourable impression against dissenters, some clergymen make assertions which it is difficult not to believe they know to be incorrect. A preacher in the establishment told his congregation not long since—that the Puritans were papists in disguise: and the Bishop of Down and Connor has entitled his recent charge—"The Churchman's Guide against Romanism and Puritanism." In the one case the statement, (notwithstanding it has something like a precedent in the Sermons of Dr. South, who had "the tongue of a viper, for he was most bitterly set against the Puritans," see the Remains of the Rev. R. Cecil, p. 283,) was, as every student of history knows, ridiculously untrue. In the other case the inuendo defeats itself by its excess. One may ask even an enemy of the Puritans, if but moderately acquainted with their history, whether it does not savour of the absurd, to associate Puritanism with Romanism?—especially at a time when so large a portion of the established clergy are posting towards Rome with great speed. A friend of mine lately heard the approach of the Tractarians hailed, by a papal ecclesiastic, in one of the pulpits of the "eternal city."

Instances like these of clerical manœuvring, are upon a par with the stale trick of railing at Nonconformists, by expounding the church of Ephesus, in the Apocalypse, as if identical with the church of England; and the Nicolaitans, whose deeds the Saviour hated, to be such as are now designated dissenters. Or, with that still more antiquated calumny, that the Nonconformists are to be likened to Korah and his sinful company. The Rev. John Penry, a noted Puritan, who was both of Oxford and Cambridge—and, like his "dear brethren Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood," suffered death for nonconformity—wrote a Treatise, applying that instructive portion of the sacred story "to the prelacy, ministry, and church assemblies of England;" thus turning the tables upon revilers. This was published in 1609. The unjust charge is, nevertheless, often reiterated, as if a wonderful discovery, and very true.

But, instead of framing a reply to the scurrilous absurdities referred to, and originating in an excessive zeal for civil establishments of religion, it seems better to imitate our blessed Lord, who, when *accused* to the chief priests and elders of what was palpably contrary to his avowed sentiments, and known practice, "answered nothing." The time is, indeed, fast approaching, when every child in a Sunday school will detect and expose the ignorance, and malignity, as well as falsehood, which, in a greater or less degree of combination, appear in all such things but too plainly.

Let us turn for a moment from devices so utterly contemptible, to the venerable Rector of Aston Sandford. That good man, after alluding respectfully to the Puritans, as "a persecuted party" adds,—"I must think that the tree of liberty, sober and legitimate liberty, civil and religious, under the shadow of which, we in the establishment, as well as others, repose in peace, and the fruit of which we gather, was planted by the Puritans, and watered, if not by their blood, at least by their tears. Yet it is the modern fashion to feed delightfully on the fruit, and then to revile, if not curse, those who planted

and watered the tree."—Letters to the Rev. Peter Roe,—Scott's Works, vol. ix., p. 532.

NOTE D, p. 5.

In the Life and Writings, 8vo, 1828, of Mrs. Dawson, of Lancaster, a Nonconformist lady of fortune, and peculiar excellence, published by one of the family, with an introductory preface, by the Rev. W. Carus Wilson, Rector of Whittington, &c., I find the following interesting testimony to Mr. Henry's Biography; and it having appeared since the publication of the enlarged Memoir in 1825, I will introduce it here. "I have been reading the life of Mr. Philip Henry, a book which I have prayed, rejoiced, and wept over. What an instance of the blessing God puts upon those who honour him in their families, by a diligent teaching of them the Holy Scriptures! May I at a humble distance tread in the same steps of this great and good man. Never were the pains of an excellent father more rewarded by God's goodness, than Mr. Henry's in his son: and his writings were indeed a treasure to the world and to the church. His Life is my favourite book next the Bible."—pp. 122, 123.

NOTE E, p 9.

It seems difficult, at times, to know what many high churchmen really intend by zeal for the "church," inasmuch as they seldom, if ever, enter the walls. Some such instances I know; of others, I have often heard. That great lawyer, and late Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Eldon, seems to have been of this description. I recollect a clerical friend of mine, who dined with a nobleman during the latter part of the Chancellor's official course, telling me the following anecdote. There were several peers at the dinner table, one of whom having extolled the Chancellor in no measured terms, added, as the crowning

point of excellence, that he was one of the buttresses of the church. "Admirable!" exclaimed the noble host, "you could not have given a more accurate description of his lordship, for, like the buttress, he is always *outside*."

NOTE F, p. 10.

The Rev. W. Palmer, of Tractarian and anathematizing celebrity, in his "Treatise on the Church of Christ, designed chiefly for Students in Theology," boldly advocates this power; and maintains that "it has always been held by the catholic church, that Christian princes are bound to defend the faith, and to enforce the canons by the civil sword;" a dogma which you will perceive justifies alike, the burning of the martyrs; the persecution of Puritans and Nonconformists; and the tortures of the Inquisition.

It is true that even Mr. Palmer hesitates as to the consequences of such teaching, and gives to "Christian princes" a method of escape from the horrible duty; but he affirms its correctness; and says, moreover, that "it is the doctrine of the church of England at this present moment." It may be it was this conviction that led a writer in Blackwood's Magazine, vol. xix. p. 45, to ask,—"Is it not a standing reproach against the church of England, that she continues to this hour under the dominion of the spirit of the dark ages?"

But, in the sermon to which I have already referred, Dr. Ibbot denies, and has disavowed, the power Mr. Palmer advocates. Locke has done the same in his Letters on Toleration. Dr. Doddridge followed with great efficiency, in a discourse peculiarly well worth perusal,—"On the Absurdity and Iniquity of Persecution for Conscience' Sake, in all its Kinds and Degrees." Nor must Archbishop Whately be forgotten. He views the matter in the same light. He demonstrates that "civil magistrates would *cease* to act on Christian principles, if they *were* to employ coercive power in the cause of Christianity; and that

in proportion as any one has a right understanding of the Gospel, he will perceive that the employment of secular coercion in its cause is at variance with its true spirit." "The Saviour," he emphatically remarks, "sent his disciples forth not to subjugate or coerce, but to *teach* all nations." See the Essays on the Kingdom of Christ, pp. 42—50, ut supra.

It will be observed that Mr. Palmer, in stating his position, says, "It has been always held by the catholic church," &c.; and he explicitly inculcates this doctrine, that "you must believe as the church believes." This, I need hardly remark, is the very quintessence and pillar of popery; the inculcation, in short, of that prostration of the understanding to the dicta of "the church" which Romanism so invariably and peremptorily demands; and against which all sound Protestants, as well as Chillingworth, have been ever strenuously opposed. If you read Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent; the Examination of the Martyrs; and the Morning Exercises against Popery; not to mention other sources of knowledge; you will be at no loss to understand what a hash of Roman catholicism Mr. Palmer has prepared for his readers.

But, before yielding to such a demand upon our belief, it is fair to enquire—What is meant by this "*church*," under which the advocates of the power to persecute uniformly shelter the odious doctrine, as well as their own bigotry, and blind zeal? Whence its infallibility, and omnipotence? Where and when did it exist? Who gave it its authority? Who is its accredited organ empowered to pronounce its decrees in the name of the whole community? And where are these decrees registered? Some of these are questions proposed by Archbishop Whately, and in the Essays before quoted he examines the pretended decisions. He shows, too, that "no shadow of proof can be offered, that the church, in the above sense,—the universal church,—can possibly give any decision at all;—that it has any instituted authorities as the organs by which such decision could be framed, or promulgated; or, in short, that there is, or ever was, any *one commu-*

nity on earth, recognized, or having any claim to be recognized, as the universal church, bearing rule over and comprehending all particular churches."—pp. 138—154.

To contemplate the provision made at Oxford in the nineteenth century, for "students in theology," is truly grievous and humiliating. Nor can I help contrasting with it the following instructive testimony as borne by Mr. Dickens, in his recent "Notes." "Whatever the defects of American universities may be, they disseminate no prejudices; rear no bigots; dig up the buried ashes of no old superstitions; never interpose between the people and their improvement; exclude no man because of his religious opinions; above all, in the whole course of study and instruction, recognize a world, and a broad one too, lying beyond the college walls."—American Notes, pp. 62, 63.

Note G, p. 23.

The attempts which have been made to pervert the scriptural term—schism—have been often exposed; but never has the subject been discussed with such ability, as by the Rev. Professor, now Dr. Hoppus, F.R.S., in an "Essay on Schism, as Opposed to the Unity of the Church, especially in the Present Times." It obtained Sir Culling Eardley Smith's prize of £100; and it thus closes an investigation of the inspired use of the term. "From the entire testimony of Scripture respecting this subject, we may conclude that the SCHISMS condemned, were such differences of opinion and of feeling, *among the members of one particular church,* on matters connected with their common interest as professed Christians, as produced heart-burnings, alienation, contention, party spirit, and other uncharitable tempers, and unseemly conduct"—pp. 226, 227.

Nonconformists were ably vindicated by Dr. Owen, Matthew Henry, Mr. Tallents, and other divines; but one "Discourse on Schism," by that learned gentleman, Edward Polhill, Esq., of

Burwash, in Sussex, deserves particular notice, because he was a conscientious member of the church of England. It was published in 1694. And see also, Mr. Orme's Life of Dr. Owen, pp. 392, 393. A very able pamphlet on this subject, the third edition of which appeared in 1714, was entitled "Dissenters no Schismatics: or Dissenting Churches Orthodox."

I will, however, add the testimony of that excellent clergyman, mentioned in Letter V., the Rev. Dr. John Edwards. It was adopted by Sir Richard Hill, whose memory is endeared to me by many pleasing recollections, in his "Apology for Brotherly Love, and for the Doctrines of the Church of England;" and he noticed that "the author seemed to him to have treated the point—schism—with peculiar impartiality." I will extract a portion only as given by the worthy baronet.—pp. 179—186, 8vo, 1798.

"In the settled churches of the sober dissenters, as they represent their own case, the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance; therefore they are true churches, and not schismatical. They do not divide and separate from the national church, so far as it conforms to the express rules, and explicit laws of Christ. Nor do they separate from any one particular church of Christ, so far as it holds the fundamentals of Christianity, and the essentials of divine worship. There is not one individual assembly, that worships God according to the manner prescribed in Scripture, but they are ready to communicate with it. So that they are at unity both with the catholic church, and all particular churches of Christ upon earth; and, *therefore, they cannot possibly be schismatics.*"

NOTE H, p. 52.

I would recommend you to examine "A Lecture on Tradition," read before the university in the Divinity School,

Oxford, March 7th, 1839, by the Regius Professor, Dr. Hampden. That very accomplished writer shows, with great clearness, and becoming dignity, and calmness, the erroneous teaching by which he is surrounded.

The way in which he strips off Puseyistic disguises, will account for the rancorous hostility the Tractarians have manifested towards him. He shows that their "more subtle" mode of representing the nature of tradition, as "in close and immediate connexion with Scripture,—as the supplement of Scripture,—as a full expression of what is correctly contained in Scripture," is likely to insinuate itself into the minds of Protestants, because it maintains *in sound* the sufficiency of Scripture. Whereas, "it is a sufficiency only for the purpose of the authorized teacher. It makes the Bible the book of the minister of religion, a revelation to the priest,—and not the handbook, as it is, of every man that has an ear to hear, and a soul to be refreshed by its living word."—pp. 31, 32.

Akin to the revival by high churchmen of the popish doctrine of tradition, is the revived use by them, in favour of their own arrogant pretensions, of those texts of Scripture upon which the church of Rome builds her infallibility: such as Luke xx. 16; Matt. xviii. 17, &c.; and 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15. How satisfactorily these have been answered again and again, you may see in such works as Claude's Defence of the Reformation; Dr. Fletcher's Lectures; and Scott's Commentary. Indeed it requires merely a very moderate degree of attention to the context, and other Scriptures, to refute the perverted glosses of high church partizans.

NOTE J, p. 53.

In the Patriot for July 14, 1842, there appeared, at full length, the judgment of the House of Lords in the case of Escott *v.* Mastin. It was an appeal against a decision of Sir Herbert Jenner—now Fust—the Judge of the Court of Arches,

in a suit promoted by Frederick George Mastin against the Rev. Thomas Sweet Escott, Vicar of Gedney, in Lincolnshire, "for refusing to bury the corpse of Eliza Ann Cliff, the infant daughter of"—two dissenters—"Thomas and Sarah Cliff, of that parish, convenient warning having been given thereof." Mr. Escott treated the child as unbaptized, because that service had been performed by a Wesleyan minister. The sentence in the court below was—that the party, the Rev. T. S. Escott, be suspended for the space of three months, and pay the costs of the suit.

The judgment was pronounced by Lord Brougham, and the sentence confirmed with costs. It is in the best style of that extraordinary nobleman. I have thus adverted to it, for the sake of the following appropriate observations by the editor of the Patriot.

"The doctrine"—as to baptism—"set up by the Puseyite fanatics would, as Lord Brougham remarks, lead to the exclusion from the church's pale, not only of all dissenters, but also of all foreigners who have been baptized otherwise than by ministers of Episcopal ordination; of certain royal godfathers and godmothers, for instance; and of the illustrious consort of the queen himself. To dissenters, indeed, it may appear to be no great advantage, to be able to claim the rites of burial according to the established church, nor could it be much worth contending for, were not their own ministers unjustly excluded from performing the rites of burial in the parochial grounds. The same bigotry that denies the validity of dissenting baptism, refuses to recognize, in the Christian minister of any non-established communion, a competency to perform any religious service; and, so far as in them lies, the priests of the Escott class would allow to no dissenter the decent rites of burial, whether performed by themselves or others. No thanks to them, that there are other cemeteries than the church can control. One would think, that, if the conscience of a high church clergyman revolted against 'reading the service' over the remains of one whom he regarded as unbaptized, heretical,

or excommunicate, he would be glad to be relieved from the disagreeable duty, by giving way to a minister willing to undertake the office. Lord Brougham suggested, that these over-scrupulous clergymen, who complain that the state should prescribe to them their spiritual duties, have the option of giving up an office to which the law has annexed duties that their conscience forbids them to perform. The *Times* is very indignant at this suggestion, and launches into a strain of transcendental Puseyism, about the independent authority, *jure divino*, of her holiness the church. But Lord Brougham is right. 'The law has required clergymen to do certain things under a penalty which it has annexed to disobedience.' If the conscience of any one is aggrieved, he has but to give up the office to which these duties are attached; not his orders, but his emoluments: not his spiritual authority, which the *Times* glorifies, but his secular station as a state priest. But even this is not required of him. Only let the dissenters and catholics be allowed, as in Ireland, to bury their own dead in the parochial cemeteries, and all difficulty and dispute will be at an end. The Escotts, and Hooks, and all their brethren, may then return at once to their high church superstitions, and their offices, their bigotry, and their emoluments, without being ever forced to violate their consciences, by reading the service over an unbaptized dissenter; and calling him a 'dear brother' after death, whom, when living, they anathematized."

NOTE K, p. 132.

So thought Lord Brook. That noble author, in his Discourse Opening the Nature of Episcopacy as practised in England, 4to, 1642, thus expresses himself, p. 61. "I shall be bold to affirm and maintain, till I see better reason, that he, whoever he be, that commands the least tittle of doctrine, or discipline, merely *ex imperio voluntatis*, in his own power and authority, without license or warrant from Scripture, or right

reason (where the Scripture hath been silent,) though the thing he so commandeth should happen to be good in itself, yet he, in his commanding, is not only tyrannical, but *anti-christian*, properly antichristian; encroaching on the royal office of Christ, which is truly high treason against God, and most properly antichristianism."

Mr. Hanbury, in his laborious "Historical Memorials," vol. ii., has devoted a considerable portion of chap. xli. to extracts from the above searching "Discourse." You may there see how his lordship disposes of the often-quoted crotchet of James the First—"No bishop, no king"—"as if," they are the noble lord's words, "the strength, nay the being of a king, depends wholly upon a bishop."

Monarchs, like Lord Brook, now know better.

NOTE L, p. 140.

The sect of the Puseyites originated in a meeting at the Rev. H. J. Rose's house, in 1833, at which Mr. Perceval, Mr. Froude, and another were present. Those gentlemen, with Professor Keble, and Mr. Newman, formed an agreement for united exertions, and established a society. Such is the rise of the Oxford Tract Society. See the Edinburgh Review, vol. lxxiii. p. 277.

NOTE M, p. 149.

You must "allow to no uninspired man, or church, or other body of uninspired men, the claim, either of superseding Scripture, or of possessing a joint and equal authority with Scripture, or pronouncing and deciding infallibly what is the sense of Scripture; but, like the Beræans, search the Scriptures daily, whether those things are so which we teach." See Archbishop Whately's Discourse on the best Mode of conveying Scriptural

Instruction. Essays on some of the Dangers of Christian Faith, pp. 235, 236, ut supra.

NOTE N, p. 151.

Dr. Pye Smith's Discourse bearing this title, and showing "the necessity of religion to the well-being of a nation," is one of great practical importance, and entitled to special observation.

Nothing, unhappily, is more common, than for high churchmen to represent dissenters, because maintaining opinions different from their own with respect to the constitution and discipline of the church of Jesus Christ, as the allies of infidels to overthrow Christianity.

In the foregoing Letters, you have seen what Nonconformity is; and the principles and doings of dissenters have been explained and illustrated. I ask, with confidence, whether anything can be more unjust, and calumnious, than to charge them with indifference to *religion;* yea, with a design to overthrow it? Their constant aim is, plainly, to uphold and diffuse religion. Look at their conduct; at their schools; at their chapels; at their colleges; at their missions, both British and foreign; at their contributions for the increase and spread of religion at home, and throughout the world. This Sermon of Dr. Smith's shows the "Association of Congregational Churches and Pastors," before whom it was delivered, not merely agreeing in the sentiment, that religion IS NECESSARY to the well-being of a nation; but urging its publication; thus doing what they could that all besides may be convinced of it too. Congregationalists would rejoice to see every individual in the realm a possessor of true "godliness;" and every interest, and institution in their beloved country thoroughly imbued with its influence.

And yet—there are not a few, who *will*, nevertheless, revile

them. Such accusers know, or ought to know, that dissenters are no more in union with infidels in their hatred to religion, or the disaffected in their opposition to government, than were English churchmen with French revolutionists in schemes of anarchy, because Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Pitt, and other philanthropists, were supported by those atrocious persons in exertions for the abolition of slavery.

I earnestly wish that such as are prone to censure their nonconforming fellow-subjects, would discriminate, and endeavour to understand matters better. Much "clamour, and wrath, and evil speaking," would, most likely, be prevented. Not many of that class, are, probably, aware, that upon the subject of "church extension," Mr. Binney has published a lecture, entitled, "Righteousness Exalteth a Nation;" a sermon particularly worthy of their regard. They would find in it an antidote to their fears, lest Congregationalists should so much as desire to overthrow Christianity. They would see how, in the judgment of the people they vilify, the righteousness of a nation *depends* upon its religion. They would have before them a statement of facts, both forcible and eloquent; and a specimen of argumentation singularly applicable to the present times; well calculated to disabuse their minds of many unfounded prejudices; and to give them, moreover, an intelligent acquaintance with things, of which, very possibly, they have "no knowledge."

I cannot help referring, in this connexion, to the amazing "hue and cry," which, some time ago, was raised against Mr. Binney. That candid, unsectarian, and most estimable minister, as every one that knows him can testify, influenced by zeal for the reception of the "Gospel," sorrowfully expressed a conviction—that the established church destroys more souls than it saves. This was the signal for what Milton calls a "universal hubbub wild." So fierce, indeed, was the onset in some quarters, as to bring the murderers of Stephen to remembrance. It is said, *they* "cried out with a loud voice.

and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord." Mr. Binney, knowing that he had said no more than what evangelical and zealous advocates of establishments had said, and printed before him, was "dumb;" "as one deaf he heard not." But "John Search" at last presented himself to the public, with his "What? and who says it?" And the witness he bore, compelled many churchmen, like Bunyan's pilgrims, when listening to the shepherds, to "look one upon another."

The Congregational Magazine for February, 1839, contains an admirable review of pamphlets by the Rev. Thomas Binney, John Search, &c. pp. 107—120.

NOTE O, p. 153.

There are some exceedingly beautiful lines on "divisions, love, and future unity," in an exquisite poem, by Mr. Sheppard, of Frome, entitled "An Autumn Dream," see part vi. 2nd ed.

Should this reference lead you to the other works of the same elegant and devout author, you will thank me. I invite you, especially, to his "Thoughts, chiefly designed as preparatory, or persuasive to Private Devotion:" and his "Essays designed to afford Christian Encouragement, and Consolation."

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